SCS #1562

Thomas F. Torrance

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Natural RELIGION Insufficient;

AND

Reveal'd Necessary to MAN's

HAPPINESS

In his present STATE:

OR, A

Rational ENQUIRY into the Principles of the modern *Deists*: Wherein is largely discovered their utter Insufficiency to answer the great Ends of Religion, and the Weakness of their Pleadings for the Sufficiency of Nature's Light to eternal Happiness;

And particularly the Writings of the learn'd Lord *Herbert*, the great Patron of *Deism*, to wit, His Books *de Veritate, de Religione Gentilium*, and his *Religio Laici*, in so far as they assert *Nature's Light* able to conduct us to future Blessedness, are consider'd, and fully answer'd:

To which Treatise are annex'd several Essays upon other Subjects.

By the late Reverend Mr. *THOMAS HALYBURTON* Professor of Divinity in the University of St. *Andrews*.

A Scorner seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not: But Knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth, Prov. 14. 6.

If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of GOD, or whether I speak of my self, John 7. 17.

Solis nosse Deos & Cœli Numina vobis,
Aut solis nescire, datum. Lucan. de Druid.

EDINBURGH,

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HAYPINESS

PREFACE.

THE GOD *of Glory hath not left Himself without a Witness; all His Works do, after their Manner, declare His Glory.* Ask now the Beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the Fowls of the Air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the Earth, and it shall teach thee; and the Fishes of the Sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these, that the Hand of the LORD hath wrought this? *Job* 12. 7, 8, 9. *Moreover it hath pleased him to instamp upon the Consciences of Men, such deep Impressions of His Being, and Glory, that all the Powers and Subtility of Hell, shall never be able to eradicate them: Though, alas, through a Custom of Sin, and especially against much Light and Conviction, the Consciences of many are debauched in these Dregs of Time to an obliterating of these Impressions which otherwise would have been strong and vivid. The Principles of* Moral Equity *carry such an Evidence in their Nature, and are also accompanied with so much of binding Force upon the Conscience, that their Obligation on rational Creatures, hath a most resplendent Clearness, and fills the little World with such a Strength, and Efficacy of Truth, as far surpasseth the plainest* Theoretical Principles. *That one Maxim,* Matth. 7. 12. Luke 6. 3. Therefore all Things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them. *That one Maxim, I say, (to pass others) was Matter of so much Wonder to some of the most polite Heathens, as they knew not well how to express their Sense of the Truth and Glory of it; they thought it worthy to be ingraven with Letters of Gold, upon the Frontispieces of their most magnificent Structures; an agreeable and speaking Evidence of its having been imprinted in some Measure upon their Hearts. Nevertheless all these, tho' sweet, strong and convincing Notices of a Deity, do yet evanish as faint Glimmerings, when compared to that Stamp of Divine Authority, which our Great, and alone Law-giver has deeply imprinted upon the Scriptures of Truth,* Psal. 19. 7. The Law of the LORD is perfect, converting the Soul: The Testimony of the

LORD

LORD is sure, making Wise the Simple, &c. *I enter not upon this large Theme which great Men have treated to excellent Purpose, I only represent very shortly, That the stupendious Account we have in these Scriptures of moral Equity in its full Compass, comprized even in ten Words, that wonderful Account, I say, proclaimeth its Author with so much of convincing Evidence, and such Strains of Glory, as I cannot possibly clothe with Words. The greatest Men among the Heathenish Nations have given the highest Accounts of their Accomplishments by framing of Laws, but besides the passing Weakness of their Performances, when viewed in a true Light, the choicest of them all have a great Deal of Iniquity inlaid with them: But all here shineth with the Glory of a Deity. Every Duty is plainly contained within these small Boundaries, and all Concerns thereof in Heart and Way, are set down so punctually, and so fully cleared in the Exposition which the Lawgiver himself has given of his own Laws, that nothing is wanting. Here also are all the Mysteries of Iniquity in the Heart so clearly and fully detected, these Evils also pursued to their most latent Sources, and the grand Spring of them all,* viz. *The Corruption of our Nature, and in so very few Words, with so much of shining Evidence and Power, that no judicious and sober Person can deny that the Finger of GOD is there, unless he offer the most daring Violence to his own Conscience. And what shall I say of the glorious Contrivance of Salvation, through the LORD JESUS our only Redeemer? Should I touch at the ground Work thereof in the eternal Counsel of the adorable Trinity, and the several Displays of it, until at Length the compleat Purchase was made in the Fulness of Time, and if I should but glance at the several Strokes of omnipotent Power, and rich Mercy through CHRIST, by which the purchased Salvation is effectually applied to every Elect Person, I would enter upon a Field from which I could not quickly or easily get off. All that I adventure to say is, The Discoveries of a Deity in each Step thereof are so relucent and full of Glory, that the Being of this material Light under a meridian Sun, without the Interposition of a Cloud, may as well be denied, as these great Truths can be disowned. Beyond all Manner of Doubt, they contain Matter of much higher, and glorious Evidence upon the Minds of all those whose Eyes the God of this World hath not blinded,* 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. John 1. 5. Deut. 29. 4. *Yet ah! midday Clearness is midnight Darkness to these who have not Eyes. But not to insist. If we add to all these the full History of the Heart of Man in all the Depths of Wickedness contained in that great Abyss, together with the several Eruptions thereof, both open and violent, as also subtile and covered, together with all the Engines of Temptations for setting it to Work, and keeping it still busie: If, I say, the perfect*

Account

Account of these Things which is given in the Word be seriously pondered, who can escape the Conviction, That He, and He only who formed the Spirit of Man within him could have given such a Display. From all this I would bewail, were it possible, with Tears of Blood, the blasphemous Wickedness of these who from the grossest Darkness and Ignorance, oppose, malign, and deride such great and high Things. But it is enough, Wisdom is justified of all her Children, *Matth.* 11:19. *The worthy and now glorified Author of this Work had a plentiful Measure, beyond many, of the surest and sweetest Knowledge of these Matters: His Soul (may I so express it) was cast into the blessed Mould of Gospel Truth. Who is a Teacher like unto GOD! Sure an inlightning Work by his Word and Spirit upon the Soul filleth it with Evidence of a more excellent Nature, and attended with a Penetrancy quite of another Kind, than any mathematical Demonstration can amount to. In this Case the Soul,* 2 Cor. 3. 3. *is an Epistle of Jesus Christ, wherein these great Truths are written by himself in Characters which the united Force and Subtilities of Hell shall be so far from deleting, that their strongest Efforts shall render the Impression still deeper, and more vivid. No mathematical Demonstration can vye with this: For as much as the Authority of the GOD of Truth, that conveys his own Testimony into the Heart, with a strong Hand, has a Glory and Evidence peculiar to it self. And tho' well known to these who enjoy it, yet of a Beauty great and mysterious, such as the Tongues of Men and Angels could not suffice to describe. The empty Cavills of that execrable Herd of blasphemous* Atheists, *or* Deists, *as they would be called, amount to a very small, and contemptible Account, seing the most subtile of them, fall very far short of these Objections, unclean Spirits propose, and urge in a Way of Temptation against Persons exercised to Godliness, which yet the Father of Lights dispelleth mercifully from Time to Time, and maketh these dark Shades to evanish, as the Sun of Righteousness ariseth upon the Soul, with a Glory and Evidence still upon the Ascendant,* Mal. 4. 2. Prov. 4. 18. Hos. 6. 3. *Nevertheless the learned and godly Author hath encountered these silly Creatures at their own Weapons, both offensively and defensively, and to such excellent Purpose as needeth not my poor Testimony: He hath searched into the very Bottom of what they alledge, with great and unwearied Diligence, he did read their Writings carefully from the very first Springs, and hath represented fairly their empty Cavills, in all the Shadows of Strength they can be alledged to have, and has refuted them plainly and copiously. On which and the like Accounts, I hope, the Work shall be, through the Divine Blessing, of great Use in the Churches of CHRIST.*

JA. HOG.

EPISTLE

OF

Recommendation.

MAny learned and zealous Asserters of the Truth of reveal'd Religion have worthily employed their Time and Talents in Defence of Christianity, against the cavilling Assaults of the bold Infidels of the present Age. The pious and worthy Author of this Treatise against Deism *thought meet to alter the usual Method of Management, by carrying an offensive War into the Enemies Territories: And hath successfully attacked the strongest Forts of the* Deists *Principles, by shewing their utter Insufficiency to guide us unto eternal Happiness. Hereunto is added a Treatise of the* Reason of Faith, *for establishing the Belief of revealed Religion upon its true and proper Basis. We therefore wishing and hoping, That these posthumous Labours of the Reverend Author may, through the blessing of GOD, prove useful and profitable for promoting and confirming the serious and unbyassed Reader in the true Christian Faith, do earnestly recommend to him the diligent Perusal of them, and him in using of them, to the Grace of GOD for that Effect.*

WILLIAM CARSTARES.

WILL. WISHEART.

JAMES HADOW.

THOMAS BLACK.

WILLIAM HAMILTON.

JAMES GRIERSON.

JOHN FLEMING.

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ORATIO INAUGURALIS

HABITA

ANDREAPOLI,

In Scholis Collegii *Mariani* Borealibus, quinto Calendas *Maii*, 1710.

In qua, post exhibitam Rationem susceptæ Muneris, Examinatur Schedula nupera, cui Titulus,

EPISTOLA

Archimedis ad Regem *Gelonem*

Albæ Græcæ Reperta, Anno Æræ Christianæ 1688.

A. PITCARNIO, M. D. ut vulgo creditur, Auctore.

EDINBURGI,

Excudebant *Andreæ Anderson* Hæredes & Successores Typographi, *Anno DOM.* M.DCC.XIV.

ORATIO INAUGURALIS.

Magnifice Domine, Rector Collegii Leonardini *Præfecte, Reverendissime, Doctissime.*
Collegii Mariani *Præfecte, Reverendissime, Eruditissime, Collega Conjunctissime, Colendissime.*
Salvatoriani *Collegii Præpositi, Honorande, Eurditissime.*
Civitatis Andreanæ *Pastoris Reverendissimi, Vigilantissimi.*
Facultatis Artium Decane Facundissime.
Artium Liberalium, Matheseos & Linguarum Professores Ingeniosissimi, Literatissimi.
Lectissima Juvenum Theologiæ præsertim Studiosa Corona.
Auditores quotquot adestis Spectatissimi.

§. I. MIREMINI forsan, qui ego Suggestum hoc, Professionem auspicaturus Theologicam, conscendere audeam; quâve Ratione, qui non ita pridem, hic Discipulorum occupâram Sedem, subito Doctorum ascendam Cathedram; quo Consilio,

I. Objectionis contra præsens Institutum Occupatio. Adquam diluendam

filio, qui per bina, plus minus, Annorum Lustra, neglecto academicæ Literaturæ Studio, ut & Linguarum, quibus utuntur docti, rudi Plebeculæ prima Religionis Christianæ Elementa instillare, inculcare Sermone vernaculo, plano & incompto, privatim & publice, repetitis Conatibus pro Modulo enitebar, statim in Doctorum Cœtu, Lingua etiam per multos retro Annos inassueta, Verba facturus appream.

II. Vitæ prioris & Studiorum Ratio breviter exponitur.

§. II. Familiarem quidem illam, quâ hactenus usus sum, docendi Methodum exigebat Status Gregis mihi commissæ, Doctrinæ Natura, & Scopus, & meum Officium. Optimum magni *Lutheri* Monitum, *Qui populariter, triviliter & pueriliter docet, optimè docet*, semper magni faciebam, & etiamnum faciam, in hoc præcipue intentus, *ut Christum crucifixum ipse cognoscam*, & aliis cognoscendum exhibeam ἐκ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λογὸς ἡ σοφίας & studiose evitatis πειθοῖς ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λογοις ἵνα μὴ κενωθῇ ὁ σαυρὸς τοῦ χριστοῦ : Hanc inquam, agendi Rationem necessariam facile negabit nemo Christianus, & mihi magis accommodam fatebuntur, qui me norunt ; Instituti autem præsentis, a priore tam diversi, Rationes multis, nullus dubito, minus videbuntur evidentes.

§. III. Ut

§. III. Ut Consilii mei Rationes vobis impertiar, suadet Officium, persuadet quam cum dignissimis illustrissimæ hujus Societatis Membris exculturus sum, aperta & minime fucata Amicitia, Observantia. Quid Rei igitur sit quod Munus a mea vivendi Ratione, Educatione, Genio, quin & Inclinatione tam remotum, nunc aggrediar, vultis dicam? Dicam apertè, familiariter, ingenuè at breviter.

III. Hinc Progressus fit ad Rationes mutati Muneris.

Numen Clementissimum, cui me totum debeo, ante undecim Annos, a privatis avocatum Studiis, utut indignissimum & reluctantem, glorioſissimo Evangelio unigeniti sui Filii separavit, & quo meos quantulosc-cunque Labores collocarem, gratioſe monstravit, in quo Munere, licet inter Populum amantissimum amatissimum ἐν ἀοθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῷ hactenus versatus sum.

§. IV. Et in hac Statione, de eo, quod aggredior, Munere aut id genus alio, ne per Somnium cogitans, summa Delectatione hæsi, etiamnum & hæsurus, nisi, quod prius aperuerat Ostium, occlusisset iterum divina Providentia, hoc solo aperto, quod jam ingredior

IV. Prius non derelictum Munus quod ejus me tædium cœperit, sed quod hujus Officii suscipiendi Necessitas imponeretur.

ingredior non sine Tremore, Viam monstret, licet Sereniſſimæ Reginæ Nominatio, Muneris Suſceptionem urgeat, quamvis Synodus Provincialis Auctoritas, cujus Decreto, iis præſertim quibus comitabatur Circumſtantiis, veſtito, refragari mihi Religio eſt.

V. Difficultates variæ Suſceptum diſuadentes.

§. V. Quæ quidem ardui hujus Muneris Suſceptionem diſſuaderent plurima primo occurrebant Intuitu, meæ præſertim Tenuitatis Conſcientia: Utpote qui non Sermone tantum, ſed & Cognitione rudis ſim. In omni autem Suſcepto prius videndum, *quid ferant Humeri quid ferre recuſent.* Nec ita Domi Hoſpes ſum, ut penitus ignorem *quam ſit mihi curta Suppellex.*

VI. Quare, his non obſtantibus, illud ſuſceperim Ratio primaria.

§. VI. Quum vero me, Vitamque meam, & quicquid ſum, Chriſto & Evangelio dudum devoveram, & quod devotum eſt ſine ſumma Impietate alienari non poſſit, aliis iiſdem inſerviendi præcluſis Viis, dominici illius Mandati Vi, *Negotiamini donec veniam*, obſtrictus teneor, nec minus hoc, quantumvis graviſſimum, effugere mihi integrum eſt. Unicam, eamque minutiſſimam, ſi ſuſcepti

Officii

Officii Ratio habeatur, Minam mihi commissam fateor lubentissime, quantumvis autem minutula occupanda est, ne cum venerit Dominus otiosus inveniar.

§. VII. Et hoc in arduo Instituto præcipuum est Solatium mihi, Rem esse cum Domino Clementissimo, qui exaltatus Dona recepit rebellibus etiam impertienda, quibus apti reddantur iis, ad quæ vocat exequendis Officiis. *Spiritus quidem est in Mortali, aſt Omnipotentis Afflatus* in Rebus præsertim divinis *intelligentes reddit, observante* Elihu *apud* Jobum. Non itaque hoc in me suscipio Munus, quod Oneri huic sustinendo Humeros meos aptos credam, sed quia is, qui me non cupientem, ne cogitantem, immo reluctantem, Necessitate quasi impositâ, ad id vocavit, is sit DEUS Fortis, Sapientissimus & Sufficientissimus, qui in Maximis Minimis sæpe utitur, *& vel ex Infantulorum Ore fundatam disponit Laudem, & Robur fundat suum, propter Hostes ad compescendum Inimicum & Ultorem sui,* Psal. 8. 3. Frustra igitur dicerem, *Puerulus sum, loqui non possum,* quum is, *qui Hominis formaverat Os & Animam, hoc vetuerit:*

VII. Quæ contra istas & alias omnes Difficultates mihi Solatio sunt & Mentem confirmant. Concluditur Introductio.

vetuerit : Et facile Sapientiam, Elocutionem, quoad Muneri huic, Modo per Jesum Christum non prorsus inaccepto, exequendo necessariæ sunt, largiri possit : Si meis vivendum, in in hac nova Provincia, esset Sumptibus, in ipso profecto Limine hæsissem desperabundus; ast *Dominus noster Neminem suorum propriis jubet militare Stipendiis*, sed quod exigit, gratiosè submini strat, & Conatus obedientiales, quantumvis imbecillos, non aspernatur, multis & variis Fidei confirmandæ interpositis Promissis. Ejus itaque Sapientiâ, Misericordiâ, & Fidelitate, efficaci Christi Mediatione & Spiritu fretus, vestræ etiam Benevolentiæ Spe sublevatus, quam nactus sum, *Spartam* pro Virili adornare conabor. Magnorum, qui mihi præcesserunt, Nominum animatus Exemplo, & eorum insistens Vestigiis, licet non Passibus æquis : *In Magnis voluisse*, parvulo præsertim, si non ut vulgare fert Proverbium, *sat est* : Aliquid tamen est, & quod Dominus noster, pro ea, qua affectus est erga nos Misericordia, se non aspernaturum promittit. Et sic de Instituti Ratione, καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ ταῦτα·

§. VIII. De

§. VIII. De quo vero, apud vos, Auditores ſpectatiſſimi, prima hac Vice, agerem Subjecto, dubius aliquamdiu hæſi; inſpicienti autem, prout ſæpius ſoleo, non ſine ſummo Mœrore, in deterius vergens Seculum, illud occurrebat Pſaltis, *Si deſtruantur Fundamenta, quid facit aut faciet juſtus?* Si labefactata concidant Religionis Fundamina, quod apertè, heu, hodie moliuntur plurimi, næ illi, qui eidem Vitam devoverunt ſuam, egregie, belle fecerunt! Hujuſcemodi autem Suppoſitio ſine gravi Offenſione Generationis Filiorum *JEHOVÆ*, vix quidem nominari poteſt. Quid igitur dicemus de miſero hoc noſtro Seculo, cui non immerito, quod de *Scoto* lepide olim ingenioſus dicebat Italus, inſcribi poteſt,

VIII. Ad Orationis Subjectum tranſitur Deploratione de Scepticiſmi in Religione Prævalentia.

Quæcunque humani fuerant, Juriſque ſacrati,
In Dubium veniunt cuncta, vocante Scoto.

Merito etiam, Auditores, vereri poteſt & debet, ne DEUS Juſtiſſimus Impietatem Seculi rependat, Fato non diſſimili illi, quod ſequentibus falſe & graphice depingit idem Epigramma.

¶ ¶ *Quid*

Quid quod & indubium illius sit Vita vocata,
Morte illum simili, ludificante Stropha,
Quum non ante Virum Vita jugularit adempta,
Quam vivus Tumulo conditus ille foret.

IX. Domestica ejus Instantia est Schedula nuper emissa.

§. IX. Dum hæc & alia serio Animo volverem, Oculos forte conjeci in Schedulam non ita pridem, hac in Gente clanculum impressam, *cui Titulus Epistola* Archimedis *ad Regem* Gelonem, Albæ Græcæ *reperta, Anno Æræ Christianæ* 1688.

X. Quæ examinanda proponitur, & quare.

§. X. Non itaq me abs Re, aut quod a mea alienum esset Professione, facturum judicavi, si larvati hujus Religionis Revelatæ Hostis retunderem Impetum; cum pro comperto haberem, Schedulam hanc, ut alia taceam, Juventuti melioris præsertim Sortis & Indolis, in prævalentem *Deismum*, præcipitandæ destinatam & sedulo distributam esse.

XI. Defectus Candoris in hujus Generis Scriptoribus notatur.

§. XI. Sæpius mecum cogitabam, si non mage pias, minus saltem impias & generosiores multo, cum nostra Religione Inimicitias agere *Judæos*, *Mahomedanos*, *Gentiles*, qui aperto eam adoriuntur Marte, quam qui inter

inter nos degentes, & Christianum præ se ferentes Nomen, quam Ore tenus profitentur, Religionem furtivis hisce Conatibus destructum eunt; Juventuti inermi & incautæ, quæ, fallaci, eheu! Acuminis Specie & lepide Dictis, quam subacta judicii Soliditate plerumque magis delectatur, hoc Modo imponentes.

§. XII. Veniam dabitis, Auditores, *Philomathematici* præsertim eruditissimi, si *Revelatam* vindicaturus *Religionem* contra impotentem *Pseudo-mathematici* Impetum, venerandi utut *Archimedis* Nomine velati, in alienam Messem Falcem immittam. XII. Pro Falce in alienam Messem, Specie tenus, immissa, Apologia.

§. XIII. *Satyram satyrice non exagitare difficillimum:* Justam vero cohibet Indignationem, illustri huic Cœtui debita Reverentia; nec parum mecum valuit aureum illud, divinum fere dixerim, ingeniosissimi *Claudiani* Monitum, XIII. Licet severe tractari mereatur Auctor, placida & modesta Examinatio intenditur.

Lene fluit Nilus, *sed cunctis Amnibus extat*
Utilior, nullas confessus Murmure Vires,
Acrior ac rapidus tacitas prætermeat ingens
Danubius *Ripas. Eadem Clementia sani*

Gurgitis immensum diducit in Ostia Gangen.
Torrentes immane fremant, lassisque minentur
Pontibus, involvant spumoso Vortice Sylvas.
Pax majora decet, peragit tranquilla Potestas
Quod Violentia nequit; Mandataque fortius urget
Imperiosa Quies——————

Placide, pacate igitur agam, & Personis parcens, de Vitiis dicam, & breviter.

Fictas historicas Circumstantias, Fabulæ necessarias non moror, quæ ex *Archytæ* nescio cujus Medici Græci, aut Græcum simulantis Observationibus Anatomicis, aut Mathesi pro divina adfert Existentia, si sincero adferantur Animo, grati accipimus; Dicteria hic & alibi Insinuatione sparsa tacitus prætereo, summa tantum sequar Fastigia Rerum.

XIV. Auctoris Scopus exquiritur.

§. XIV. Auctoris ante omnia, & Scripti Scopus quis sit, videndum. Quid sibi velit fictus hic *Archimedes* ex Pagina octava sub Finem, hariolari facillimum est. Christianam quidem Religionem nominatim non aggreditur, licet in eam præcipue hanc fabricatam Machinam, sine Charitatis Dispendio affirmari possit.

§. XV. Post-

§. XV. Postquam autem Loco supra memorato Religionem omnem particularem, nullo habito Discrimine, venerando *Sectæ* Nomine indigitasset, duo præcipue in omni Secta consideranda monet, *Sectæ* scil. *Propria* & *Communia*: *Propria* ea sunt quibus una ab alia distinguitur *Secta*; *Communia* vero quæ omnibus *Sectis* sunt communia, universalia, *scil.* illa Justi & Æqui Axiomata, cujusmodi est illud, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*, & quæ inde fluunt similia. XV. Auctoris in hunc Finem Verba notantur.

§. XVI. De Communibus illis quæ sola Necessaria & Utilia deprædicat Author, Bona an sint Controversia nulla; Utilia, Necessaria & Optima haud inviti fatemur. XVI. Quid in his incontroversum sit.

§. XVII. Merito tamen quæri potest, An mera materialis, ut loquuntur Scholæ, harum Regularum Observatio, nullo habito Respectu Gloriæ Divinæ, Religionis Finis ultimi, aut Auctoritatis summi Legislatoris, quæ omnis Obedientiæ, proprie sic dictæ, Ratio formalis indubie existat; ut alia præteream, XVII. Cautio necessaria Concessioni subjungitur.

teream, merito, inquam, controverti poteſt, an talis Obſervatio Legum naturalium *Obedientia* dici mereatur, Deo accepta, aut Obſervantibus ad Felicitatem æternam utilis eſſe poſſit.

XVIII. Hujus & ſociorum Auctorum de Religione tractantium *Oſcitantia* notatur.

§. XVIII. Et ut hoc obiter moneam, attendenti cuivis obvium eſt, quam contortæ, ne dicam ridiculæ ſint hujuſcemodi de *Religione* Diſquiſitiones, nullâ vel ſemel injectâ *Finis ultimi* Mentione. *Religio Medium eſt*, de *Medio* autem, niſi Reſpectus ad *Finem* habeatur, Judicium ferre ſolidum impoſſibile eſt. In tota autem hac Diſſertatiuncula ad alium *Religionis Finem*, niſi forſan ad eam Morum Coercionem quæ Vitæ civilis Utilitati inſerviat, Reſpectus habeatur nullus: De *Acceptatione noſtra apud DEUM, æterna Felicitate, & Gloria ſummi Numinis*, altum ubique Silentium.

XIX. Auctoris de propriis omnium Religionum particularium Determinatio & ejuſdem Confirmatio.

§. XIX. Propria quod attinet quaſi ex Tripode pronunciat. *Obſervationes & Hiſtorias omnium Gentium demonſtrare*, N. B. *non una magis quam alia* Secta, *Homines eſſe factos meliores (etiam quam ſunt ii qui nulli* Sectæ *inſerviunt) neque Fructum aliquem in Communibus per-*

perceptum ex admissis Propriis------ neque aliter fieri posse---- quum illi Religionis Auctores, sive Fautores, Sacerdotes, Haruspices, &c. *hoc est, qui Sectæ Propria invenerunt, eamque condiderunt, de Propriis quam de Communibus magis semper soliciti sunt.*

Hæc confirmat Author, *Romanæ Sectæ a Numa* institutæ Exemplo; & *Romanos* post institutam a *Numa Religionem*, meliores non fuisse quam anteà fuerant, nec *Numam*, Jussu *Nymphæ Ægeriæ*, Communia mandantem, iis Vim ullam addidisse obligatricem, quam prius non habuerant.

§. XX. Hæ sunt illæ Demonstrationes, quas *Geometricis similes Studiis haud vulgaribus excultas, & quæ sufficere possunt Hominibus cordatis*, pro ea qua est Modestia, fictus hic jactat *Archimedes*.

XX. Auctoris Jactantia notata.

§. XXI. Uno ut dicam Verbo, ὕγιες hic μυθος, sanum plane nihil est. Postulatum, cui tota innititur Moles, falsum est, Fidei Historiarum, & certissimæ contrarium Experientiæ.

XXI. Hæc Auctoris Dictata Suppositioni falsæ superstruuntur, quod fuse probatur Respectu Christianæ Religionis.

Quis etenim non novit, qui hæc nosse curat, quod non citius per Orbem Terrarum pro-

propagata & recepta fuit *Religio Christiana*, quam cæteris annumerat Sectis, quin statim Homines innumeri, qui vilia fuerant Peccati Mancipia, Legesque illas communes susque deque habuerant, relictis Peccatis, Legibus prius contemptis, sinceram, rationalem voluntariam, imo spiritualem ex Corde, non sine summa Delectatione, Authoritatis Divini Legislatoris Reverentiâ præcipue ducti, Obedientiam præstiterunt?

Nec defuerunt alii non pauci, qui umbratilem Virtutis Speciem vânæ Gloriolæ Spe, aut id Genus aliis moti Illecebris, sectati fuerant, qui jam Christianæ εἰς τύπον διδαχῆς traditi, rejecta Umbra, veram & minime fucatam Sanctitatem, Justitiam & Pietatem coluerunt, in Gloriam *JEHOVÆ* tanquam Finem & Scopum ultimum collimante. Hæc notiora sunt, Auditores, quam ut Probatione indigeant.

XXII. Quod pro suo Pronunciato adfert Argumentum non concludit.

§. XXII. Quod de ea, quam introduxit *Numa Pompilius*, *Deæ*, ut pertendebat, *Ægeriæ* Monitu, Religione aut Superstitione potius allegat Autor, inconcludens est. In Inductionibus ex uno Exemplo, nisi subsumatur eandem esse reliquorum Conditionem, nihil

nihil concludi, Lippis, quod aiunt, & Tonsoribus notum est.

Præterea, concedatur Authori in omni falsa Religione Propria Communibus Vim nullam addere posse, attamen nisi particulares omnes *Religiones* aut *Sectas* falsas esse demonstraverit, ne Hilum quidem proficiet.

§. XXIII. Quod de *majori Fautorum Religionum particularium de Propriis quam Communibus Solicitudine* adfert, id pro solita dictum est Charitate, & si eo, quem intendere videtur Autor, Sensu accipiatur, quod scil. *Religionis* V. G. *Christianæ* Fautores omnia Communia negligant, aut serio non inculcent, Propria solummodo urgentes, falsissimum est. Utinam, qui *se nulli inservire Sectæ & Communibus contentos* esse jactant, æque Justi Bonique tenaces essent.

XXIII. Obiter sparsæ Insinuationes examinantur.

Si dicat, Autores *Sectarum*, licet Communia non prorsus negligant, de Propriis tamen magis esse solicitos, cuivis Christiano, quod reponat, in promptu est, Neminem, *scil.* Communibus illis eam præstare posse Obedientiam qua glorificetur DEUS, quæ DEO accepta & Saluti æternæ utilis sit, si

non admittantur quæ Christianæ Religioni Propria sunt.

Hisce debemus Cordis illam Renovationem, sine qua Nemo DEO inservire potest, Spiritus Gratiæ Communicationes, Remissionem Peccatorum, Acceptationem cum DEO, Vitam denique æternam, & quæ eidem obtinendæ necessaria sunt Omnia.

Quam hæc sint Utilia, imo plane Necessaria, non est quod Pluribus ostendam.

XXIV. Ulterius hinc ostenditur Auctoris Scopus.

§. XXIV. Hæc sunt, Auditores, quæ, si quicquam valeat *Archimedis* Judicium, *cordatos omnes illicere possunt, ut ab omni se abstineant Secta.* Quis sit Autoris Scopus jam videtis, *Hoc* Ithacus *velit, & magno mercentur* Atridæ. Veritus autem Autor, ne obesæ naris Lectoribus, quæ hactenus protulit, convincendis non sufficiant, *Theorema* ex superabundanti profert Geometricum, quod maxime Incredulos etiam nolentes, & Plumbeos convincat. Audiamus, sic itaque se habet.

XXV. Auctoris Theorema proponitur.

§. XXV. Postulat *sibi duas exhiberi Sectas.* Æquum est Postulatum; quod vis, factum est; *Christianam* & *Mahomedanam* exhibemus; procedat *Theorema.* *Cre-*

Credibilitatis Quantitas, sive quantum hoc est Fidei quod primæ Sectæ Propriis convenit, eam habet Rationem ad id quantum est Fidei, sive Credibilitatis, eam Quantitatem quæ Propriis secundæ convenit, quam habet Numeris Auctorum sive Testium, qui Propria primæ primi prodidere ad Numerum Testium secundæ similium.

Et Fides (de Quantitate sive Magnitudine semper loquor, quam solam Geometra rimatur) quæ debet adhiberi Propriis Sectæ, fert eam Rationem ad Fidem quæ Communibus adhiberi debet, quam fert Rationem illorum Numerus, qui Propria primi prodidere ad Numerum Generis humani Communia excolentem.

§. XXVI. Geometricum saltem Sonum agnoscite, Auditores, an vero Propositionum Geometricarum Vis convictrix subsist, si non magni esset *Syracusii* Senis Autoritas, merito forte dubitari possit. XXVI. Quam vanum sit hoc Theorema ostenditur fuse.

Quod autem sibi velint decepticium Verborum Tendiculæ Incautis inescandis Artificio adhibitæ breviter dicam. Huc Res tota redit,

Probabilitas Religionis cujuslibet commensuratur Numero eandem asserentium Testium. Religio quam profitentur plurimi mage probabilis est,

quam sectantur pauciores minus est credibilis.

Communia universum Genus humanum agnoscit; Propria Sectæ cujusvis comparative paucos habet Authores, Assertores, Testes, adeoque multo minus credibilia sunt, quam sunt Communia.

Ex Clava Herculem, en mirum illud Theorema! Et si Populus vult decipi, decipiatur. Sed serio agamus.

Si de solo Hominum Testimonio Sermo sit, vera profecto Theorematis Pars neutra est: Extendatur ulterius, Impietate non carebit. Quis etenim est Mortalium *cui de meliori Luto finxit Præcordia Numen*, qui non novit, quod ne Tyrones quidem latet, non unice Testium Numerum, sed eorundem Qualitates & Testimonii Circumstantias Credibilitatem intendere aut minuere?

Et si debita instituatur Comparatio inter Propria *Christianæ Religionis* & Communia, de quibus Autor, *præcise quatenus Hominum nituntur Testimoniis*, non veremur asserere Testimonia Autorum & Fautorum *Christianæ Religionis*, iis, quibus comitabantur, Circumstantiis vestita, non minus, ne dicam mage, credibilia esse, quam sunt Testimonia reliquorum Hominum, qui Christiani non sunt, pro com-

Communibus illis, si solis humanis agendum esset Testimoniis.

Sed Communia illa, quum in Relatione mutua DEUM inter & Homines fundentur, firmiori innituntur Fundamento, quam est Hominum quorumvis Authoritas.

Et *Fides*, quam *sanctæ nostræ Religioni* debemus, & adhibemus, non Hominum Testimonio, Argumentationibus aut Eloquio nititur, sed in *Potentia* & *Virtute* consistit Divina, ut cum Apostolo loquar, hoc est, Numinis veracissimi Testimonio convictrici, nativa & sibi propria Luce Mentem illuminanti, & de ipsius divina Origine certiorante innixa, stat nullo mobilis Ævo.

Ut itaque *ad Hominum, ut vult Autor, pauciſſimorum Authoritatem Rem totam deferamus*, Ratio nulla est; quod hoc supposuerit Autor non miror, quum sit Genus Hominum qui ὅσα μὲν οὐκ οἴδασι βλασφημοῦσιν, an quod eodem Commate Apostolus addit, hic addi debeat, judicent alii, judicabit subito venturus Dominus. Theorematis Demonstrationem si expectaveritis, frustrabimini, Auditores. Regi *Geloni*, sequentibus hæc demandata est Provincia.

Jud. Epist. Com. 10. ὅσα δὲ φυσικῶς ὡς τὰ ἄλογα ζῶα ἐπίστανται ἐν τούτοις φθείρονται.

§. XXVII.

XXVII. Principium ex quo Demonstratio præcedentis Theorematis petenda proponitur, & falsitatis arguitur.

§. XXVII. *Facile Theorema noſtrum demonſtraveris, Rex* Gelo, *poſtquam te monuero, parem adſumi omnium ubique Teſtantium de Propriis Veracitatem: Quippe parem ubique Fidem apud ſuos Autores invenere, qui omnes* primæ Sectæ *ſuæ Conditoribus, tanquam Viris integerrimis & ſcientiſſimis, credidere.*

Parem quidem ubique eſſe Teſtantium Fidem, gratis adſumi in aperto eſt: Sed cum hic Rei Cardo vertatur, adſumi non debuit, ſed demonſtrari; quod parem apud ſuos quique Fidem obtinuerunt, Argumtum eſt magno vix dignum *Archimede.*

Qui *Chriſtianæ Religionis* Veritatem Argumentis hiſtoricis demonſtrarunt plurimi, olim & noſtra Ætate non gratis adſumunt Teſtes, quorum utuntur Teſtimonio, Viros integerrimos, quod Fidem apud ſuos obtinuerant; ſed probant ex Principiis certiſſimis, & quæ apud omnes ſunt in confeſſo, eos revera tales fuiſſe, additis inſuper innumeris Teſtimonii Circumſtantiis, quæ eujuſdem Veritatem fortiter adſtruant.

XXVIII. Inſinuationes quædam notatæ.

§. XXVIII. Quorſum vero hæc omina tendant, nimis profecto evidens eſt. Larvatus hic *Religionis* Hoſtis hoc vult, *Fidem Religionis*

Religionis cujuſlibet ſolo Hominum Teſtimonio niti, & illud etiam Teſtimonium Fallaciæ merito ſuſpicari poſſe, quod ſatis inſinuat Narratione de Romuli in Cœlum Raptu. An autem hæc Autor ſolummodo intenderit, ut fabuloſam hanc Tranſlationem ſuſpectæ reddat Fidei, non perinde clarum eſt. In Reſurrectionem & Aſcenſionem CHRISTI.

Obſervat inſuper Autor aliâ eſſe quæ Teſtimoniorum Vires ſuperant, quæ admitti non debent, quibuſcunque ſuffulciantur Teſtimoniis.

Quid autem ſibi velit *ridicula*, quam ſubjungit, Suppoſitio de *Hannibale*, qui tres Duces diverſos, unus in ſe haberet, & Romanos tribus Pugnis eodem Tempore, ſed diverſis in Locis, ſuperaſſet: Quid, inquam, ſibi velit, niſi hæc in ſacroſanctam Trinitatem adornata ſit Illuſtratio, intelligere facile non eſt. In Trinitatem.

Unicum ſupereſt affine authoris Problema, ſic itaque ſe habet.

Datis Sectæ Propriis verum Sectæ Autorem invenire, ſive definire quis qualiſve fuerit. Quæ in Illuſtratione hujus Problematis *Religioni revelatæ* injuria hic & alibi ſparſim inſinuat, quum ſupponantur, non probentur, tacitus prætereo.

Autorem

Autorem itaque ad Problematis Solutionem properantem sequamur. Sic igitur infit, *Ad Problematis Solutionem accedimus.*

Solutionem ergo, Auditores, expectate magno dignam *Archimede* appositam, expectate quoque Replicationem, ast monet Autor vel Editor,

Cætera desiderantur.

Spe igitur excidistis semel, & quam excitarat Spem, ludificat : Quum itaque moneat Sapiens, *Quod deficit non posse numerari.*

Desideratur quoque Replicatio.

Bis ludificamini, Auditores spectatissimi, *& quæ instituí cœpit Amphora, currente Rota, Urceus exit.* **Dixi.**

TO

TO THE

READER.

READER,

WHoever thou art, the Queſtion agitate in the enſuing Diſcourſe is that wherein thou haſt a conſiderable Concernment. If thou art a *Chriſtian*, the enſuing Diſcourſe is deſign'd to juſtify thy Refuſal of that *Religion* which has now got a great Vogue amongſt thoſe *Gentlemen*, who ſet up for the *only Wits*, and aim at monopolizing *Reaſon*, as if they alone were the *People*, and *Wiſdom* was *to die with them*. They cry up their *Religion* as the *only reaſonable Religion*, and traduce all, who will not join with them, as *credulous* and *unreaſonable Men*. Whereas, on the contrary, no Man that uſes his *Reaſon* can cloſe with that, which they would obtrude on us as *rational Religion*: Nor can any Man, without being guilty of the *fondeſt Credulity*, venture his Salvation upon this *modern Paganiſm* that ſtruts abroad under the modiſh Name of *Deiſm*, which, I hope, the enſuing Diſcourſe will evince, wherein it is made appear, That the *Light of Nature* is *utterly inſufficient* to anſwer the great Ends of *Religion*, and that conſequently we had the juſteſt Reaſon in the World, if there were none, to wiſh for a *Revelation* from

from GOD, as what is of absolute Necessity to our Happiness; and since there is one, with the greatest Thankfulness to embrace it, cleave to it, and comply with it.

If, Reader, thou hast thy *Religion* yet to choose, which I am afraid is too common a Case, in this unstable Age; then it's high Time thou wert bethinking thy self of *Religion* in earnest.

> *To Morrow thou wilt live, thou still dost say,*
> To Day's *too late, the Wise liv'd Yesterday.*

And if after too long a Delay thou mean to avoid an unhappy Choice, Reason advises thee to consider well, That when the Choice is made, Care be taken to make it so, as to prevent the Necessity either of a second Choice, or a too late Repentance for choosing amiss. There is a Set of Men, who cry up at this Day *Natural Religion*, and especially commend it to such as have *no Religion*. 'Tis such as thou art they desire to deal with, and among such it is they are most successful. But if thou hast a Mind not to be deceiv'd in a Matter of such Moment, it imports thee not a little to consider what may be said against that, which it's like may be offer'd thee, as a *Fine*, *Modish*, *Reasonable Religion*, meet for a *Gentleman*, a Man of *Wit* and *Reason*. I have here offer'd me to prove this all to be said without, yea against *Reason* and *Experience*. Well, first hear, and then judge, and after choose or refuse as thou seest Cause.

As for the Management of this useful Enquiry, it is wholly suited to that which at first was only design'd, the Satisfaction of the Writer's own Mind about the Question that's here proposed. I entred not upon this Enquiry with an Eye to oppose any Man, or triumph over Adversaries, and so did industriously wave those Catches, Subtilties, and other Niceties us'd frequently by Writers of Controversy. My only Design was to find the *Truth*, and therefore I chose clearly to state the Question, which I found the *Deists* always avoided, and plainly propose my Reasons for that Side of it I took, after Trial, to be the Truth. As to the opposite Opinion, I made it my Business to make a diligent Enquiry into the strongest Arguments advanc'd for it, candidly to propose them in their utmost Force, and closly to answer them; avoiding, as much as might be, such Reproaches as are unworthy of a *Christian*, or an Enquirer after Truth, tho' I met with frequent Provocation, and found some Time

how

how true that is, *Difficile est non scribere Satyram contra Satyram.*

It was not Amusement I aim'd at, or to please my own Fancy, or tickle the Reader's Ears with the Gingle of Words, or divert and byas the Judgment by a Flood of Rhetorick. I never design'd to set up for an Orator. My Business lies quite another Way, it's what I lay no Claim to, and what I think is to be avoided in Discourses of this Kind. All I aim'd at as to Language, was to clothe my Thoughts in plain and intelligible Expressions. The Reader is to expect no more, and if he miss this, I hope it will be but rarely.

It is not to be expected, That a Discourse which was begun in an inverted Order, the middle Part being first writ, and that was compos'd in the Intervals of Business of a very different Nature, at spare Hours, by one of no great Experience, and an utter Stranger to Writings of this Sort, shall be free of Blemishes that may offend nicer Palats. Some few Repetitions could not, at least without more Pains in transcribing, than I had either Leisure or Inclination for, well be avoided. Nor could a Discourse so often interrupted by other Business, and upon so very different Subjects, be carry'd on with that Equality of Stile that were to be wish'd, especially by one who was never over much an Affecter of Elegancy of Language. In a Word, the Work is long, much longer than I design'd, and yet without wronging the Subject, at least as I am otherwise stated and engaged, I could not easily shorten it. If he pleases to inspect the Book, he may possibly find, That I had Reason for insisting at that Length I have done. However every one has not his Art who could enclose *Homer*'s *Iliads* in a Nut's Shell.

I am sensible, That what I have discours'd in the first Chapter of the ensuing Treatise concerning the *Occasions of Deism*, will grate hard upon a Set of Men, who have for many Years bygone carry'd all before them, and so took it ill to have any Censures bestow'd on them, tho' they did severely animadvert upon the real or supposed Faults of others. As to this I have not much to say by Way of Apology. That *Deism* has sprung up and grows apace amongst us, is on all Hands confess'd. Others have offer'd their *Conjectures* concerning the Occasions of its Increase. Why I might not offer my *Opinion* also, I know no Reason. The principal Subject of the ensuing Treatise suffers not, tho' I should herein be mistaken. In proposing my Conjecture I did not pursue the Interest of any Party; but have

freely blam'd all Parties. If the Sticklers for the *Arminian* or *Socinian* Divinity are touch'd, it was becauſe I thought they were to be blam'd, and therefore I have withſtood them to their Face. As to the Tendency of their Principles I have been ſparing, becauſe that Debate has been ſufficiently agitate in the *Low Countries* betwixt the contending Parties. The Reader who would be ſatisfy'd as to this, may peruſe thoſe who have directly managed this Charge, and the Anſwers that have been made, and judge upon the whole Matter as he finds Cauſe. But whatever may be as to this, the Manner of their Management may perhaps be found leſs capable of a colourable Defence. And it is upon this that I have principally inſiſted. To oppoſe, eſpecially from the Pulpit, with Contempt, Buffoonry, Banter and Satyr Principles, that ſober Perſons of no contrary Perſwaſion do own to have at leaſt a very plauſible-like Foundation in the *Word of GOD*, and which have been, for well near Sixty or Seventy Years after the Reformation, the conſtant Doctrine of the Fathers, and Sons of the *Church of England*, and have by them been inſert into her *Articles*, and ſo become a Part of her *Doctrine*, is a Practice that I do not well underſtand how to excuſe or free from the Imputation of *Profanity*, and which hath too manifeſt a Tendency to *Atheiſm*, to admit of any tolerable Defence. The *Scriptures*, and *Truths*, that have any Countenance in them, or Opinions which they ſeem really to Perſons otherwiſe ſober, pious and judicious, not only to teach, but to inculcate as of the higheſt Importance, are not a meet Subject for Raillery; nor is the Pulpit a meet Place for it. This is that for which principally I have blam'd them, and this I cannot retract. If they take this ill, I aſk them, Have not others as much Reaſon to take it ill that the *Doctrines* of the *Church of England* taught in her *Articles* and *Homilies*, and profeſs'd by her *learned Biſhops*, who compos'd them, and by her *Sons* for ſo long a Tract of Time, as conſonant to, found in, and grounded on the *Word of GOD*, ſhould be ſo petulantly traduc'd by Wit, Raillery, and declamatory Invectives from Preſs and Pulpit; and that too by thoſe who have ſubſcrib'd to theſe *Articles* and *Homilies*? This Management has been complain'd of by ſober Perſons of all Parties, *Churchmen* and *Diſſenters*,

See Arcana Arminianiſmi *by* Videlius, *and* Videlius Rapſodus, *with* Videlius *his Rejoinders*, &c.

See Biſhop of Sarum *on the Articles, Preface*, P. 7, 8.

Dissenters, *Contra-Remonstrants* and *Remonstrants* too, as I could make appear, if there were Occasion for it: And why I might not also complain, I want yet to be inform'd. None is charg'd save the guilty. Others who are free have no Reason to be angry. And, perhaps, they who will be offended at this, would scarce have been pleas'd if I had let it alone.

In the Tenth Chapter of this Treatise, I have oppos'd the Opinion that asserts the *Heathen World* to be under a *Government of Grace*. I know it is maintain'd by many learn'd Men both at home and abroad, from whose Memory, if dead, or just Respect, if alive, I design'd not to detract. Nor did I design to list them with the *Deists*, whom I know to have been solidly oppos'd by severals that were of this Opinion. But yet I do think the Opinion it self destitute of any solid Foundation, with all Deference to them, who think otherwise, either in *Scripture*, *Reason* or *Experience*. And I am further of the Mind, That the learned Abettors of it, had never embrac'd an Assertion, that exposes them to so many perplexing Difficulties, and puts them upon a Necessity of using so many, I had almost said, *unintelligible* Distinctions for its Support, if they had not been driven to it by some peculiar *Hypothesis* in Divinity which they have seen meet to embrace. If any intend to prove what I have deny'd, I wish it may be done by proper Arguments, directly proving it, and not by advancing an *Hypothesis* that remotely infers it, and which, in it self, or, at least as propos'd by those whom I have met with, is so dark'ned by a huge Multitude of subtile, mysterious and uncouth Distinctions, that I can scarce ever project so much Time as to understand them. However this much I must say, That so cross does this Opinion seem to *Scripture*, *Reason* and *Experience*, That it will go a very great Way to weaken the Credit of any *Hypothesis* on which it inevitably follows. However, I hope this may be said, and different Opinions about this Point, without any Breach of Charity, may be retain'd. *Diversum sentire duos de Rebus iisdem incolumi licuit semper Amicitia.* I know the Abettors of this Opinion are hearty Friends in the Main to the Cause I here maintain.

The Scheme, I have in the Close of that Chapter offer'd by Way of *Digression*, of GOD's *Government* of the *Heathen World*, is not design'd as a full Account of that Matter, which as to many of its Concernments is of those Things that are not *reveal'd*, and so belong not to us; much less is it design'd to be the *Ground* of a *peremptory Judgment*

as

as to the *eternal State* of them, who are without the *Church*: But only to let see, That *any Thing* we certainly know as to GOD's Dealings with them, in the common Course of his *Providence*, may, upon other *Suppositions* and *Principles*, beside that rejected, be accounted for. The judicious and sober Reader may judge of it as he sees Cause. I hope I have in a Matter of such Difficulty avoided any unbecoming Curiosity, or affecting to be *wise above what is written*.

If any blame me for the Multitude of Quotations, I answer, The Subject I undertook rendred this unavoidable. I have us'd the utmost Candor in them. Sometimes out of a Regard to Brevity I have avoided the Translation of Testimonies quoted from Authors who writ in a different Language. The learn'd will not complain of this: And if any Person of tolerable Judgment, who is not learn'd, will be at Pains to peruse the ensuing Discourse, he will find as much said, without regarding those Quotations, as may satisfy his Mind upon this Subject.

As to what I have, in the ensuing Papers ascrib'd to Mr. *Gildon* Publisher of the *Oracles of Reason*, I had writ it before I understood his Recovery from *Deism*. But yet I thought it not meet to alter it, because there are, no Doubt, many others who entertain the same Notions he then did maintain, and my Opposition is to the *Principles* and not the *Persons*. As for his Recovery I congratulate it, and wish it may be such as may secure him from an after Reck'ning for the Hurt he has done.

If any *Deist* shall see meet to undertake this Debate, I decline it not. If they treat my Book as they have done those of others, every Way my Superiors, and as Rats are wont to do, gnaw only the Outside, divert to incident Things that are not to the Purpose, and single out rather what seems exceptionable than what is of Moment, following him who did so,

——————————— *& quæ*
Desperat tractata nitescere posse relinquit.

I have somewhat else to do, than to take any Notice of such Impertinency. If any shall offer a *solid* and *rational Confutation*, which yet I am not much afraid of, and convince me not by Jest, Buffoonry and Raillery, but by solid Arguments of my being in a Mistake,

Cuncta recantabo Maledicta, priora rependam
Laudibus, & vestrum Nomen in Astra feram.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN this Sceptical Age, which queſtions almoſt every Thing, it is ſtill owned as certain, That *all Men muſt die.* If there were any Place for diſputing this, there are not a few, who would ſpare no Pains to bring themſelves into the Diſbelief of a Truth, that gives them ſo much Diſturbance, in the Courſes they love and ſeem reſolv'd to follow: But the Caſe is ſo clear, and the Evidence of this Principle ſo pregnant, which is every Day confirm'd by new Experiments, that the moſt reſolved Infidel is forc'd, when it comes in his Way, tho' unwilling, to give his Aſſent, and moan out an *Amen. The Grave is the Houſe appointed for all the Living.* Some arrive ſooner, ſome later; but all come there at Length. The Obſcurity of the meaneſt cannot hide him, nor the Power of the greateſt ſcreen him from the impartial Hand of Death, the Executioner of Fate, if I may be allowed the Uſe of a Word ſo much abus'd. As its coming is plac'd beyond Doubt, ſo its Aſpect is hideous beyond the Reach of Thought, the Force of Expreſſion, or the utmoſt Efforts of the fineſt Pencil in the moſt artful Hand. It, in a Moment, daſhes down a Fabrick, which has more of curious Contrivance than all the celebrated Pieces put together, which the moſt refin'd humane Wits have invented, even when carried to the greateſt Height, which the Improvements of ſo many ſubſequent Generations, after the utmoſt of Application and Diligence, could bring them to. It puts a Stop to many Thouſand Motions, which, tho' ſtrangely diverſified, did all concur, with wonderful Exactneſs, to maintain, and carry on the Deſign and Intendment of the glorious and divine Artificer. How this divine and wonderful Machine was firſt erected, ſet agoing, and has, for ſo long a Tract of Time, regularly performed all its Motions, could never yet be underſtood by the moſt elevated Underſtandings. *Can'ſt thou tell how the Bones grow in the Womb of her that is with Child,* is a Challenge to all the Sons of Art, to unfold the Myſtery?

Many have accepted it; but all have been foil'd. Something they could say: But, in Spight of it all, the Thing they found a Myſtery, they left ſo ſtill. How can one then look on the *Diſſolution* of ſo admirable a Contrivance, a Machine ſo curious, and ſo far ſurpaſſing humane Art, without the deepeſt and moſt ſenſible Regret. It untwiſts that myſterious Tie, whereby Soul and Body were ſo faſt link'd together, breaks up that intimate and cloſe Correſpondence, that intire Sympathy which was founded thereon, diſlodges an old Inhabitant; and while it lingers, being unwilling to remove, *Death* pulls that curious Fabrick, wherein it dwelt, down about its Ears, and ſo forces it thence, to take up its Lodgings, it can ſcarce tell where. And upon its Removal, that curious Fabrick, that a little before was full of Life, Activity, Vigour, Order, Warmth, and every Thing elſe that's pleaſant, is now left a dead, unactive, cold Lump, or diſordered Maſs of loathſome Matter, full of Stench and Corruption. Now the Body is a Spectacle ſo hideous, that they who lov'd, and who imbrac'd it before, cannot abide the Sight or Smell of it; but ſhut it up in a Coffin, and not content with that, away they carry it, and lodge it amongſt Worms, and the vileſt Inſects in the Bowels of the Earth, to be conſum'd, devour'd, torn and rent by the moſt abominable Vermin that lodge in the Grave.

Quantum mutatus ab illo!

We have all heard of the Afflictions of *Job*. Two or three Meſſengers arrive, each after another, and ſtill the laſt is worſt. Every one tells a Story. The firſt is ſad; but its ſtill more melancholy that follows. The *Diſaſter* is ſo terrible, that it fills the World with juſt Aſtoniſhment. And yet after all, what is this to *Death*, which alone is able to furniſh Subject, more than enough, for ſome Thouſands of ſuch melancholy Meſſages! One might bring the dying Man the melancholy Tidings, That he is diveſted of all his beneficial, pleaſant, and honourable Employments: While he is yet ſpeaking, another might be ready to bid him denude himſelf of all his Poſſeſſions: A Third, to continue the Tragedy, might aſſure him that there is a Commiſſion iſſued out to an impartial Hand, to tear him from the Imbraces of his dear Relations, without regarding the hideous Out-cries of a loving Wife, the Meltings of tender Infants, the Interceſſions of dear Friends: While others continuing ſtill the mournful Scene, might aſſure him that he was no more to reliſh the Fragrancy of the Spring, or taſte the Delights of the Sons of Men, or ſee the pleaſant Light of the Sun, or hear the charming Airs of Muſick, or the yet more uſeful Converſe of Friends. And to make the Matter

ſadder

ſadder ſtill, if it can well be ſo, the Story might be ſhut up with a rueful Account of the parting of Soul and Body, with all the horrible Diſaſters that follow upon this Parting.

Thus the Caſe evidently ſtands. Not a Title of all this admits of Debate. To every Man it may be ſaid, *De te Fabula narratur.* What a Wonder is it, that ſo grave and important a Subject is ſo little in the Thoughts of Men? What Apology can be made for the Folly of Mankind, who are at ſo much Pains to ſhelter themſelves againſt leſſer Inconveniencies, quite overlooking this, that is of infinitely greater Conſequence?

Here is the *Light-ſide* of Death, which every Body may ſee. What a rueful and aſtoniſhing Proſpect doth it give us? Where ſhall we find Comfort againſt that diſmal Day, whereon all this ſhall be verified in us? He is ſomething worſe than a Fool or Mad-man, that will not look to this. And he is yet more mad that thinks, That rational Comfort in ſuch a Caſe can be maintained upon dark, ſlender, and conjectural Grounds.

It is certain that which muſt ſupport, muſt be ſomething on the *other Side Time.* The one Side of Death affords nothing but Matter of Terror, if we are not enabled to look forward, and get ſuch a Sight of the other, as may ballance it, we may reaſonably ſay, That *it had been better for us never to have been.*

Undoubtedly, therefore, no Queſtion is ſo uſeful, ſo neceſſary, ſo noble, and truly worthy the Mind of Man as this. *What ſhall become of me after Death? What have I to look for on the other Side of that awful Change?*

Thoſe Arts and Sciences which exerciſe the Induſtry and Conſideration of the greater Part of the thinking World, are calculate for Time, and aim at the Pleaſure or Advantage of a preſent Life. It is *Religion* alone that directly concerns it ſelf in the important Queſtion laſt mentioned, and pretends to offer Comforts againſt the melancholy Aſpect of Death, by ſecuring us in an Upmaking for our Loſſes on the other Side Time. Men, who are not blind to their own Intereſt, had Need therefore to take Care of the Choice of their *Religion.* If they neglect it altogether, as many now do, they forfeit all Proſpect of Relief. If they chooſe a wrong one, that is not able to reach the End, they are no leſs unhappy. The World may call them *Wits*, or what elſe they pleaſe, who either wholly neglect and laugh over all Inquiries after *Religion*, or who ſuperficially look into Matters of this Nature, and paſs a haſty Judgment: But ſober Reaſon will look on them *as ſomewhat below the Condition of the Beaſts that periſh.*

It is much to be regreted, that the Bulk of Mankind found their Principles, as well as Practice and Hopes on no better Bottom than *Education*, which gives but too just Occasion for the smart Reflection of the witty, tho profane Poet.

Dryden. Hind and Panther.

By Education most have been misled;
So they believe, because they were so bred.
The Priest continues what the Nurse began:
And thus the Child imposes on the Man.

Most Part seek no better Reason for their Belief and Practice than Custom and Education. Whatever those offer in Principle, they greedily swallow down, and venture all on so weak a Bottom. And this sure is one of the great Reasons why so many miscarry in this important Matter. It is true, in this enquiring Age, many, especially of the better Quality, scorn this Way. But it is to be fear'd that the greater Part of them flying on Extremes, as is common in such Cases, have fallen into another and a worse one, if not to themselves, yet certainly of more pernicious Consequence to the publick. They set up for *Wits* and *Men of Sense*. They pretend to have found out great Mistakes in the Principles of their Education, the Religion of their Country; and thereon, without more ado, reject it in Bulk, and turn *Scepticks* in Religion. And yet after all this Noise, most of them neither understand the Religion they reject, nor know they what to substitute in its Room, which is certainly an Error of the worst Consequence imaginable to the publick; since Men once arriv'd at this Pass, can never be depended on. Men may talk what they please. A Man of no Religion is a Man not to be bound, and therefore is absolutely unmeet for any Share in a Society which cannot subsist, if the sacred Ties of Religion hold it not together.

But whatever Course such Persons, on the one Hand or other, steer; the more considerate and better Part of Mankind, in Matters of so high Importance, will, with the nicest Care, try all, that they may *hold fast what is good*. If a Man once understands the Importance of the Case, he will find Reason to look some deeper, and think more seriously of this Matter, than either the *unthinking Generality*, who receive all in Bulk, without Trial, as it is given them, or, the forward *would-be-wits*, that oftimes are guilty of as great, and much more pernicious Credulity in rejecting all, as the other in receiving all.

But, whereas there are so many different *Religions* in the World, and all of them pretend to conduct us in this important Enquiry; which of them

them shall we choose? The *Deists*, to drive us into their Religion, which consists only of Five Articles, agreed to, as they pretend, by all the World, would bear us in Hand, That a Choice is impossible to be made of any particular Religion, till we have gone through, with such a particular Examination of every Pretender, and all things that can be said for or against it, as no Man is able to make. *Blount* tells us, as *Herbert* before had done, That *unless a Man read all Authors, speak with all learned Men, and know all Languages, it is impossible to come to a clear Solution of all Doubts.* And so in Effect, its ptetended impossible to be satisfied about the Truth of any particular Religion. If this Reasoning did hold, I should not doubt to make it appear, That no Truth whatsoever is to be received; and in particular, That their, so much boasted of, *Catholik Religion* cannot rationally be intertain'd by any Man. If we can be satisfied upon rational Grounds about no Truth, till we have heard and considered all, that not only has been said, but may be alledged against it; what Truth can we believe? Here it is easy to observe that some cannot do, unless they overdo. The Intendment of such Reasoning is obvious: Some Men would cast us loose as to all Religion, that we may be brought under a Necessity to take up with any Fancy they shall be pleas'd to offer us; a Man that is sinking will take Hold of the most slender Twig. The Papists have vigorously pursued this Course in Opposition to the Protestants, to drive them into the Arms of their *infallible Guide*. And indeed the learn'd *Herbert* his Reasonings on this Point, after whom the modern *Deists* do but copy, seem to be borrowed from the *Romanists*, and are urg'd upon a Design not unfavourable to the Church of *Rome*, of which perhaps more afterwards.

Blount Religio Laici, *Page* 91. *Herbert* Religio Laici, *Page* 12.

But to wave this thin Sophistry, any one that will, with a suitable Application, engage in the Consideration of what Religion he is to choose, will quickly find himself eas'd of this unmanageable Task, which the *Deists* would set him. His Enquiry will soon be brought to a narrow Compass, and the Pretenders, that will require any nice Consideration, will be found very few.

For, a very overly Consideration of the *Religions in the Heathen World*, will give any considerate Mind Ground enough to rest fully assur'd, That the desir'd Satisfaction as to *future Happiness*, and the Means of attaining it, are not thence to be expected. Here he will not find what may have the least Appearance of satisfying. The wisest of the Heathens scarce ever pretended to satisfie themselves, much less others, upon these Heads. All

Things

Things here are dark, vain, incoherent, inconsistent, wild, and plainly ridiculous for most Part; as will further appear in our Progress. Their Religions were, generally speaking, calculated for other Purposes, and look'd not so far as Eternity.

Nor will it be more difficult to get over any Stop that the *Religion* of *Mahumet* may lay in our *Enquirer*'s Way. Let a Man seriously peruse the *Alcoran*, and if he has his Senses about him, he cannot but there see the most pregnant Evidences of the grossest, most scandalous and impudent Imposture, that ever was obtruded upon the World. Here he must expect no other Evidence for what he is to believe, but the bare Assertion of one, who was scandalously impious to that Degree, that his own Followers know not how to apologize for him. If you inquire for any other Evidence, you are doom'd by the *Alcoran* to everlasting Ruin, and his Slaves are ordered to destroy you. He forbids any Enquiry into his *Religion*, or the Grounds of it, and therefore ye must either admit in Bulk the entire Bundle of Fopperies, Inconsistencies and choking Absurdities, that are cast together in the *Alcoran*, without any Trial, or reject all: And in this Case, no wise Man will find it hard to make a Choice.

Alcoran Chap. 4.

After one has proceeded thus far, he may easily see, That he is now inevitably cast upon one of four Conclusions, either first he must conclude it certain that *all Religion is vain*, that there is nothing to be expected after this Life, and so commence *Atheist*. Or 2*dly*, He must conclude, That *Certainty is not attainable about these Things*; and so prove *Sceptick*. Or 3*dly*, He must pretend, That every one's *Reason unassisted is able to conduct him in Matters of Religion*, ascertain him of future Happiness, and direct as to the Means of attaining it; and so set up for *natural Religion*, and turn *Deist*. Or 4*thly*, He must acquiesce in the *Reveal'd Religion* contain'd in the Scriptures, and so turn *Christian*, or at least *Jew*.

As to the first of these Courses, no Man will go into it, till he has abandon'd Reason. An *Atheist* is a Monster in Nature. That there is nothing to be expected after this Life, and that Man's Soul dies with his Body is a desperate Conclusion, *which ruins the Foundation of all humane Happiness*; even in the Judgment of the *Deists* themselves. There are two material Exceptions which are sufficient to deter any thinking Man from closing with it.

Letter to a Deist, *Page* 125.

The one is the *Hideousness of its Aspect*. Annihilation is so horrible to humane

humane Nature, and has so frightful a Visage to Men who have a Desire of Perpetuity, inlaid in their very Frame, that none can look at it seriously without the utmost Dread. 'Tis true, guilty Atheists would fain take Sanctuary here; yet were they brought to think seriously of the Case, they would not find that Relief in it which they project. I have been credibly inform'd, That a Gentleman of no contemptible Parts, who had liv'd as if indeed he were to fear or hope nothing after Time, being in Prison and fearing Death (tho' he escap'd it and yet lives) fell a thinking seriously, when alone, of *Annihilation*: And the Fears of it had so deep and horrible Impression on his Mind, that he profess'd to a Gentleman, who made him a Visit in Prison, and found him in a grievous Damp, that the Thoughts of Annihilation were so dreadful to him, that he had rather think of a thousand Years in Hell. Guilty Sinners, to ease their Consciences, and screen them from the disquieting Apprehensions of an *After-reckoning*, retreat to this, as a Refuge; but they think no more about it, save only this and that in an overly Way, that it will free them from the Punishment they dread and deserve. But if they would sedately view it, and take under their Consideration all the Horrour of the Case, their Natures would recoil and shrink: It would create Uneasiness instead of Quiet, and increase the Strait rather than relieve them from it.

Besides, which is the other Exception against it, were there never so much Comfort in it, as there is none; *Yet it is impossible to prove that there is nothing after this Life*. There is nothing that is tolerable can be said for it. None shall ever evince the Certainty of the Soul's dying with the Body, till he has overthrown the *Being of a God*, which can never be done so long as there is any Thing certain among Men. Further, as there is little or nothing to be said for it, so there is much to be said against it. Reason affords violent Presumptions, at least, for a future State. And all the Arguments, which conclude for the Truth of Christianity, join their united Force, to support the Certainty of a State after this Life. Till these are remov'd out of the Way, there is no Access for any to enjoy the imaginary Comfort of this Supposition. But who will undertake solidly to overturn so many Arguments, which have stood the Test of Ages? They who are likely to be most forward, and favour this Cause most, dare scarce allow these Reasonings *a fair Hearing*, which plead for a future State for Fear of rivetting the Impression of the Truth deeper on their Minds, which they desire to shake themselves loose of. And how then will they overthrow them? In

fine,

fine, he is a Mad-man, who will go into a Concluſion, whereof he can never be certain, and wherein, were it ſure, he can have no Satisfaction. The firſt forbids the *Judgment*, the laſt diſſuades the *Will* and *Affections* from reſting in it.

As to the ſecond Concluſion above-mention'd, that ſets up for *Scepticiſm* in Matters of Religion, and bids us live at Peradventures as to what is to be fear'd or hop'd after Time; it is a Courſe that nothing can juſtifie ſave abſolute Neceſſity. It lies open to the worſt of Inconveniencies. Nothing can be imagin'd more melancholy than its Conſequences, and the Pretences for it are vain and frivolous.

If it is really thus, that Man can arrive at no Certainty in Matters of Religion, and about his State after Time, how deplorable is Man's Condition? His Caſe is comfortleſs beyond what can be well conceiv'd. Nor can his Enjoyments afford him any ſolid Satisfaction, while ghoſtly Death looks him in the Face, and the Sword hangs over his Head, ſupported by a Hair. Will not the Proſpect of this rueful Change (of whoſe diſmal Attendants we have given ſome Account) imbitter his ſweeteſt Enjoyments? And will not the Horrour of the Caſe be much increas'd by reſolving upon a perplexing Uncertainty as to what may come after? In how diſmal a Plight is the poor Man, who on the one Hand is certain of the ſpeedy Arrival of Death with all it's frightful Attendants; and on the other, is told that he muſt rove in Uncertainty, till the Event clear him, whether he ſhall be intirely annihilate, and ſo plunge into that horrible Gulf where *Atheiſts* ſeek Sanctuary! Or if he ſhall not be hurried headlong into theſe endleſs Torments, which the Conſciences of guilty Sinners, when awaken'd, preſage; or, if he ſhall ſoar aloft into Regions of endleſs Bleſs, which ſinful Mortals have but little Reaſon to expect; or, finally whether he is not to launch out into ſome State reducible to none of theſe. If here we behoove to fix, one would not know how to evite two Concluſions that are horrible to think of; " That our Reaſon, whereby we are capable of foreſeeing, " and are affected with Things at a Diſtance, is a heavy Curſe; and " that the profligate Atheiſt, who endeavours to mend this Fault, in " his Conſtitution, by a *continual Debauch*, that never allows him to " think any more of what is certainly to come, than if he were a Brute " incapable of Fore-thought, is the wiſeſt Man.

Damocles.

Beſide, as was above inſinuate, the Pretences for this Courſe are vain. 'Tis true, moſt of thoſe who ſet up for *Wits* in this unhappy Age, are meer *Scepticks* in Religion, who admit nothing as certain, but

but boldly queſtion every Thing and live at Peradventures. Yet we are not oblig'd to think that this *Scepticiſm* is the Reſult of a ſerious Enquiry, and the Want of Certainty thereon; but thoſe Gentlemens Way of Living is inconſiſtent with ſerious Religion; they are therefore deſirous to have ſuch a Set of Principles as may, if not favour them in the Practices they have a Mind to follow, yet not incommode them ſore. This Principle gives not abſolute Security againſt Impunity; but it *ſeems*, and *but ſeems*, to juſtifie them in a preſent Neglect of Religion, and gives them a *may be* for an Eſcape from fear'd and deſerv'd Puniſhments; and favours that Lazineſs that cannot ſearch for Truth, where it lies not open to the Eye, even of thoſe who care not to ſee it. Their Practice and Courſe of Life ſhews them impatient of Reſtraints, that they love *Liberty*, or rather *Licentiouſneſs*; and are not willing to come under any Bonds. They greedily graſp at any Difficulty that ſeems to make never ſo little againſt Religion; an Evidence that they bear it no real Good-will. They neither converſe much with Books, nor Men that may afford them Satisfaction, in Reference to their real Scruples, which is Proof enough they deſign not to be ſatisfied. They are light and jocular in their Converſe about the moſt ſerious Matters, an Evidence that their Deſign is not to be inform'd. It is a good Obſervation of the wiſe Man, *Prov.* 14. 6. *A Scorner ſeeketh Wiſdom and findeth it not: but Knowledge is eaſy to him that underſtandeth.* This is the real Myſtery of the Matter with thoſe Gentlemen, whatever they may pretend.

I know they want not Pretences, taking enough with the unthinking, whereby they would juſtifie themſelves in their Infidelity. The principal one is, That they find it eaſily to load Religion with Abundance of Difficulties, not eaſily, if at all, capable of Solution. But after all, theſe Gentlemen uſe thoſe *Objections* as the *Scepticks* did of old, not ſo much to maintain any ſettled Principle, no not their belov'd one, whereof now we ſpeak; as to create them Work and make Sport with thoſe who would ſeriouſly confute them, and to ward off Blows from themſelves, who have neither Principles nor Practice capable of a rational Defence.

'Tis like indeed that ſometimes they may meet with ſuch, who albeit they own Religion, are yet incapable of defending it againſt ſuch Objections. But this is no Wonder; ſince there are weak Men of all Perſuaſions. And their Weakneſs is, or ought, not to be any real Prejudice to the Truth they maintain. Beſides, every one may know that Ignorance of any Subject is fertile of Doubts, and will ſtart Abundance of

Difficulties, whereas it requires a more full and exact Acquaintance with the Nature of Things to solve them; and this falls not to every one's Share.

Further, If this be allowed a reasonable Exception against Religion, That it's liable to Exceptions, not easy to be solved, it will hold as well good against all other Sorts of Knowledge, as against Religion; yea and I may add, it concludes much stronger; for the farther any Subject is above our Reach, the less Reason we have to expect, that we shall be capable of solving every Difficulty that may be started against it. There is no Part of our Knowledge, that is not encumbred with Difficulties, as hard to be satisfyingly solved, as those commonly urg'd against Religion. If this be a sufficient Reason to question Religion, that there are Arguments which may be urg'd against it not capable of a fair, or, at least, an easie Solution; I doubt not, upon the same Ground, to bring the Gentlemen who maintain this, if they will follow out their Principle, to reject the most evident Truths, that we receive upon the Credit of Moral, Metaphysical, and Mathematical Demonstrations; yea, or even upon the Testimony of our Senses. For I know few of these Truths that we receive upon any of those Grounds, against which a Person of a very ordinary Spirit may not start Difficulties, which perhaps no Man alive can give a fair Account of: And yet no Man is so foolish to call in Question those Truths, because he cannot solve the Difficulties which every idle Head may start upon those Subjects. I may give innumerable Instances of the Difficulties wherewith other Parts of humane Knowledge are embarrass'd: I shall only hint at a few.

That Matter is divisible in, or at least, consists of indivisible Points, is with some a Truth, next to self-evident; that the quite contrary is true, and Matter is divisible *in Infinitum*, appears no less certain to many others. But if either of them should pretend themselves capable of solving the Difficulties, that lie against their respective Opinions, it were sufficient to make all Men of Sense and Learning doubt of their Capacity and Judgment: For the Difficulties on both Hands are such,

Lock *of* humane Understanding, *Edit.* 5. *Pag.* 207. ----*I would fain have instanced in our Notion of Spirit any thing more perplexed, or nearer a Contradiction, than the very Notion of Body includes in it; the Divisibility* in Infinitum *of any finite Extension, involving us, whether we grant or deny it, in Consequences impossible to be explicate, or made in our Apprehensions consistent; Consequences, that carry greater Difficulty, and more apparent Absurdity than any Thing that can follow from the Notion of an immaterial Substance.*

such, that no ingenuous Man that understands them, will pretend himself capable of giving a fair Solution of those, which press that Side of the Question he is inclin'd to.

Again, Whether we will, or will not, we must believe one Side, and but one Side of the Question is true; that either Matter is divisible *in Infinitum*, or not; that it consists of Indivisibles or not; these are Contradictions. And it's one of the most evident Propositions that the Mind of Man is acquaint with, That Contradictions cannot be true, or that both Sides of a Contradiction cannot hold. And yet against this Truth, whereon much of our most certain Knowledge depends, insoluble Difficulties may be urg'd: For it may be pretended, that here both Sides of the Contradiction are true, and this Pretence may be enforc'd by the Arguments above mention'd, which confirm the two opposite Opinions, which no *Mortal* can answer. Shall we therefore believe that Contradictions may be true?

That Motion is possible I am not like to doubt, nor can I, while I know that I can rise and walk; nor is he like to doubt of it, who sees me walk. And yet I doubt not the most ingenious of our Atheistical Wits would find himself sufficiently straitned, were the Arguments of *Zeno Eleates* against Motion well urg'd, by a subtile Disputant. I shall offer one Argument against Motion, which I am fully satisfy'd will puzzle the most subtile Adversaries of Religion to solve satisfyingly. There are stronger Arguments proving that Matter is divisible *in Infinitum* than any Mortal can solve or answer, tho' I perhaps believe it untrue. And it is as certain as the Sun is in the Firmament, that if Matter is divisible *in Infinitum*, it consists of an infinite Number of Parts (what some talk of indefinite is a Shelter of Ignorance, and if it is us'd any other Way than as a Shield to ward off Difficulties for a while in a publick Dispute, the Users cannot be excus'd either of gross Ignorance, rooted Prejudice, or Disingenuity.) This being laid down as proven, and proven it may be by Arguments, which none living can satisfie, that Matter is divisible *in Infinitum*, and that consequently it contains an infinite Number of Parts. Nor is it less certain, That according to these Conclusions laid down, if one Body move upon the Surface of another, as for Instance, An Inch in a Minutes Time, it must pass by an infinite Number of Parts; and it's undeniable, That it cannot pass one of that infinite Number of Parts without some Portion of Time; now if so, what a vast Time will it require to make that little Journey, which we know can be perform'd in a Moment? Will it

not evidently require an Eternity? What Difficulty can any urge more difficult to be ſolved againſt Religion than this? And yet for all this he were a Fool who would doubt of Motion.

As to Mathematical Certainty, tho' many Boaſts are made of the Firmneſs of its Demonſtrations; yet theſe may, upon this Ground, be call'd all in Queſtion. And I nothing doubt, That if Men's Intereſts, real or pretended, lay as croſs to them, as they are ſuppos'd to do to the Truths of a Religion, many mo Exceptions might be made againſt them, than are againſt thoſe, and upon full as good, if not better, Reaſon. In Juſtification of this Aſſertion, I might proceed to demonſtrate how trifling even the Definitions of Geometry, the firmeſt of all the Mathematical Sciences, are. Its Definitions might be alledg'd upon no inconſiderable Grounds trifling, nonſenſical and plainly ridiculous. Its Demands or Poſtulates, impracticable. Its Axioms or ſelf-evident Propoſitions, controvertible, and by themſelves they are controverted. Any one who would ſee this made good in particular Inſtances, may conſult (beſides others) the learned *Huetius* his *Demonſtratio Evangelica*, wherein the Illuſtration of his Definitions, Axioms and Poſtulates, he compares them with thoſe of Geometry and prefers them to thoſe, and ſhews they are incumbred with fewer Difficulties than the other, tho' without derogating from the juſt Worth and Evidence of Mathematical Sciences. Beſides what he has obſerved, I may add this one Thing more, That thoſe Sciences deſerve not any great Regard, ſave as they are applyed to the Uſe of Life, and in a Subſerviency to Man's Advantage. And when thus they are applied to Practice, the Difficulty is conſiderably increas'd, and they may eaſily be loaded with innumerable and inſoluble Inconveniencies. For then, their Definitions ceaſe to be the Definitions of Names, and are to be taken as the Definitions of Things that are actually in Being. Their Demands muſt not only be practicable, but put in Practice. And who ſees not how many inextricable Difficulties the Practiſer will be caſt upon? The Demonſtration may proceed bravely ſo long as they hold in the Theory, and mean by *Punctum, id cujus Pars nulla eſt*, and the ſame may be ſaid of Lines and Surfaces, and all their Figures, without obliging us to believe that really there are any ſuch Things. But when we come to the Practice, they muſt go further, and take it for granted, that there are ſuch Points, Lines, Surfaces and Figures. This turns what was before only an Explication of a Name, into the Definition of a Thing. And therefore I am now left at Liberty to diſpute, Whether there is any ſuch Thing? or, Whether

indeed

indeed it is possible that there should be such? And who sees not now that they are incumbred with as many Difficulties as may perhaps be urg'd against any Science whatsoever.

It were endless to enumerate the Things we must believe, without being capable to resolve the Difficulties about them. The veriest Infidel must suppose that Something is eternal, or all Things are eternal, or that they jump into Being without any Cause. Which ever he shall choose, he is led into a Labyrinth of Difficulties, which no mortal Wit can clear. We must all own, That either Matter and Motion are the Principle of Thought; Or, that there are immaterial Substances which affect Matter, and are strangely affected by what befals it. Which ever Side any shall choose, he is cast upon inextricable Difficulties. Much more might be said on this Head; but what has been said is more than enough to shew that if this Course is taken, it saps the Foundations of all humane Knowledge, and there is no Part of it safe.

Besides, This Way of questioning Religion upon the Pretence of Difficulties lying against it, is contrary to the common Sense of Mankind, contradicts the Practice of all wise Men, and is inconsistent with the very Nature of our Faculties: For, if I have clear unexceptionable and convincing Proof for any Truth, it's against all Reason to reject it, because I have not so full and comprehensive Knowledge of the Nature and Circumstances of the Object, as is necessary to enable me to solve all Difficulties that may occur about it: Yea, such is the Nature of our Faculties, that to justifie in the Opinion of the nicest Enquirers after Truth, nay, to extort an Assent, clear Proof is sufficient: Whereas to unty all Knots, and solve all Objections, perfect and comprehensive Knowledge is absolutely needful; which Man's Condition allows him not to expect about the meanest Things. And the more remote any Thing lies from common Observation, the less Reason there is still to look for a Fulness of Knowledge and Exemption from Difficulties. If therefore Men will turn Scepticks in Religion, to justifie themselves, they must attempt the Proofs whereon it is grounded, *Sampson*-like they must grasp the Pillars that support the Fabrick, and pull them down. If this is not done, nothing is done. And he that will undertake this, must have a full View of their Force, and find where their Strength lies: Now a serious View of this will be sufficient to deter any wise Man from the Undertaking.

In a Word this Scepticism *can yield no Ease or Satisfaction to a reasonable Soul. For if a Man shall think rationally, his Reason will suggest to him,*

That

That tho' all Religion at present seems uncertain to him, yet upon Trial perhaps he may find the Grounds of Religion so evident, that he cannot withhold his Assent: This will at least oblige him to a serious Enquiry into the Truth. Next, In Uncertainties (supposing after serious Enquiry he still thinks the Truths of Religion such) a prudent Man will incline to what is most probable. Finally, He will choose and steer such a Course of Life as will be safest, in Case he shall in Experience afterward find, That there is a God, and a future State. All which shew the Folly of our Scepticks, and, were it seriously considered, would much mar their Design, which is thereby to justifie a licentious Life.

Now we have considered, and sufficiently expos'd the two first Branches of the above mentioned Choice; and consequently every Man must find himself cast upon a Necessity of one of two. He must either betake himself to *natural Religion*, and so turn *Deist*; or he must embrace the *Scriptures*, and turn *Christian*: For as to the *Jewish Religion*, it is not likely to gain many *Converts*.

If therefore we are able to demonstrate the utter *Insufficiency of natural Religion*, in Opposition to the *Deists* who set up for it, we reduce every Man to this Choice, That he must be a *Christian* or an *Atheist*; or which is the same upon the Matter, a Man of *no Religion*; For an *insufficient Religion* is in Effect *none*. And to demonstrate this, That *natural Religion* is utterly insufficient, that unassisted Reason is not able to guide us to Happiness, and satisfie us as to the great Concerns of Religion, is the Design of the subsequent Sheets. In them we have clearly stated and endeavoured with Closeness to argue this Point. We have brought the Pleadings of the learn'd Lord *Herbert*, and the *modern Deists*, who do but copy after him, to the Bar of *Reason*, examin'd their utmost Force, and, if I mistake it not, found them weak and inconcludent.

As for the Occasion of my Ingagement in this Controversy, it was not such as commonly gives Rise to Writings of this Nature. I undertook it with no Design of Publication. I was provok'd by no Adversary in particular: But every Man being oblig'd to understand upon what Grounds he receives his Religion, I studied the Point for my own Satisfaction, and in Compliance with my Duty.

As for the Reasons of my undertaking this Part of the Controversy I shall not say much. The only wise GOD, *who has determin'd the Times before appointed, and made of one Blood all Nations of Men that dwell on the Earth, has appointed them the Bounds of their Habitation*, cut out different Pieces of Work for them, cast them into different Circumstances, and hereby expos'd them to Trials and Temptations that are not of the same Kind

Kind. As every Man is obliged to cultivate in the beſt Manner he can the Bounds of Land aſſigned to him, and defend his Poſſeſſions; ſo every one is concern'd to improve and defend after the beſt Form he may thoſe Truths, which his Circumſtances have oblig'd him to take peculiar Notice of, and his Temptations, of whatever Sort, have endeavoured, or may attempt to wreſt out of his Hands.

Beſides, We live in a warlike Age, wherein every one muſt be of a Party in Matters of Religion. And Religion is a Cauſe, which when diſputed, no Man is allowed to ſtand neutral. As all are concern'd to chooſe the right Side; ſo every one is oblig'd to provide himſelf with the beſt Armour his Arſenal can afford, both for defending himſelf and others that own the ſame Cauſe, and to annoy the common Enemy. *Nor is this Work peculiarly confin'd unto thoſe, who by Office are obliged to it:* For, *in publico Diſcrimine eſt omnis Homo Miles:* eſpecially contra hoſtes publ. cos.

Beſides, It is well known, That the moſt *bold Attempt* that ever was made upon *reveal'd Religion*, ſince the Entrance of Chriſtianity into the World, has been made, in our Day, by Men, who ſet up for *natural Religion*, and who have gone over from *Chriſtianity* unto a *refin'd Paganiſm*, under the Name of *Deiſm*. Two Things they have attempted, to overthrow *Revelation*, and to advance *natural Religion*. The laſt Work has been undertaken, I may without Breach of Charity boldly ſay it, not ſo much *out of any real Affection to the Principles or Duties of natural Religion*, as to *avoid the* Odium *inevitably following upon a Renunciation of all Religion*; and becauſe they ſaw that Men would not eaſily quit Chriſtianity without Something were ſubſtitute in its Room, that might at leaſt have the Name of Religion. *Reveal'd Religion* has been worthily defended by many, of old and of late, at Home and Abroad: But the *Inſufficiency of natural Religion* has been leſs inſiſted on, at leaſt in that Way, that is neceſſary to ſtraiten an obſtinate Adverſary. And ſeveral Things incline me to think an Attempt of this Nature ſeaſonable, if not neceſſary, at this Time.

The Times are infectious, and *Deiſm* is the *Contagion* that ſpreads. And that which has taken many, particularly of our unwary Youth, of the better Quality, off their Feet, and engag'd them to eſpouſe this Cauſe, is the high Pretence that this Way makes to *Reaſon*. They tell us that their *Religion* is intirely *reaſonable*, and that they admit nothing, ſave what this dictates to them, and they endeavour to repreſent others as eaſy and credulous Men. Now I thought it meet to demonſtrate, for undeceiving

undeceiving of such, That none are more credulous, none have less Reason upon their Side, than they who set up for *rational Religion*.

Again we have stood sufficiently long upon the defensive Part, we have repuls'd their Efforts against *Revelation*. It seems now seasonable, that we should act offensively, and try how they can defend their own Religion, and whether they can give as good Account of it, as has been given of Christianity. To stand always upon the defensive Part, is to make the Enemy doubt *ours*, and turn proud of their own Strength.

The Reasonableness of this will further appear, if we consider the Quality of the Adversaries we have to do with, and their Manner of Management. The Enemies who have engag'd *reveal'd Religion*, sensible of their own Weakness, to defend themselves at Home, and endure close Fight, do commonly make In-roads, where they expect none, or a faint Resistance. They design not so much to conquer, as to disturb. Jest, Buffoonry, or at best Sophisms and such little Artifices are the Arguments they use, and the Weapons of their Warfare. The best Way to make such Rovers keep at Home is, to carry the War into their own Country, and to ruin those Retreats they betake themselves to when attack'd. They have seen what Christians can say in Defence of *reveal'd Religion*. It is now high Time to see how they can acquit themselves on Behalf of *natural Religion*. It is easy to impugn. It is a Defence that gives a best Proof of the Defender's Skill, and says most for the Cause he maintains.

I own indeed that most, who have evinc'd the Truth of *reveal'd Religion*, have said Something of the Weakness of *natural Religion*. But this has only been by the by, and in a Way too loose to straiten obstinate Opposers, not to speak of the too large Concessions that have been made them by some.

Finally, *natural Religion* being the only Retreat, to which the Apostates from Christianity, betake themselves, and whereby they think themselves secur'd from the Imputation of plain *Atheism*; its hop'd that a full and convincing Discovery of its Weakness may incline such, as are not quite debauch'd, to look how they quit Christianity, and engage with that which, if this Attempt is successful, must hence forward pass for *disguised Atheism*.

It now only remains, that I offer some Account of the Reasons that have induc'd me to manage this Controversy in a Method so far different from that which is commonly us'd. The Reasons of this have been above insinuate, and I shall not insist much further on them, lest I should seem

ſeem to detract from Performances to which I pay a very great Regard. The Method ſome have choſen, in managing this Controverſy with the *Deiſts*, to me appears inconvenient. They begin with an Endeavour to eſtabliſh the Grounds of *natural Religion*, and by the Help of Light borrow'd from *Revelation*, they carry the Matter ſo far, and extend *natural Religion* to ſuch a Compaſs, that it looks pretty compleat-like: which has too evident a Tendency to leſſen its *real Defects*, and make them *appear* inconſiderable.

Again, I am afraid that ſome have gone near to give up the whole Cauſe. This Fault I would be very loth to charge upon all. Many I know have dealt faithfully in it, and deſerve Praiſe. But how to excuſe ſome in this Caſe I know not. One tells us that, *Its true indeed, that natural Religion declares and comprizes all the Parts of Religion, that are generally and in all Times either neceſſary or requiſite*! And much more to the ſame Purpoſe. This is much ſuch another Aſſertion of the Weakneſs of *natural Religion* againſt the *Deiſts*, as the ſame Author gives us of the *Perfection of the Scriptures*, in Oppoſition to the ſame Perſons in another Place of his Book. *I could*, ſays he, *prove, I think, by undeniable, unavoidable Inſtances*, what Mr. *Gregory* of *Oxford* ſays in his Preface to ſome critical Notes on the Scriptures that he publiſhed, *There is no Author whatſoever*, ſaith this learned Critick, *that has ſuffered ſo much by the Hand of Time, as the Bible has.* Is this the Way to overthrow the Sufficiency of natural Religion and to defend the Scriptures? This is not the only Remark I could make upon this Author, were it my Deſign. But this may let us ſee how neceſſary it is to deal a little more plainly with the Aſſerters of *natural Religion.*

Diſcourſe concerning natural and Reveal'd Religion, by Stephen Nye, *Part* 2. *Chap.* 1. *Page* 97. ubi ſupra, *Page* 199.

Further, to adorn *natural Religion* with the Improvements borrowed from *Revelation*, is the ready Way to furniſh thoſe who ſet up for its *Sufficiency*, with Pretences to ſerve their Deſign, and to ſtraiten themſelves, when they come to ſhew its Defects. And perhaps I ſhould not miſtake it far, if I aſſerted, That the ſtrongeſt Arguments urged by *Deiſts*, have been drawn from unwary Conceſſions, made them by their Adverſaries.

And this is the more conſiderable, that the Perſons, with whom we have to do in this Controverſy, are, generally ſpeaking, either of no great diſcerning, or ſmall Application; who have no great Mind to

wait upon the Buſineſs, or look to the Bottom of it: Now when ſuch Perſons find many Things granted, they are ready to think all is yielded, and ſo run away with it, as the Cauſe were their own. That ſuch Conceſſions have done no good Service, there is too much Reaſon to believe. This I am ſure of, it would have been long before the *Deiſts* could have trimm'd up *natural Religion* ſo handſomly, and made it appear ſo *like a ſufficient Religion*, as ſome have done, who mean'd no ſuch Thing.

Finally, The Apoſtle *Paul*'s Method is doubtleſs moſt worthy of Imitation, who, when he is to prove Juſtification by Faith, and inforce an Acceptance of it, ſtrongly convinces of Sin, and the utter Inſufficiency of Works for that Purpoſe. The beſt Way, in my Opinion, to engage Men to cloſe with *Reveal'd Religion*, is ſtrongly to argue the *Inſufficiency* of *natural Religion*.

As to the Performance it ſelf, and what I have therein attain'd, I am not the Judge competent. Every Reader muſt judge as he ſees Cauſe. I have not the Vanity to expect that it ſhould pleaſe every Body. The vaſt Compaſs of the Subject, the Variety of the Purpoſes, the Uncommonneſs of many, if not moſt of them, with Reſpect to which I was left to walk in untrodden Paths, and other Difficulties of alike Nature, with candid and judicious Readers will go a great Way toward my Excuſe in leſſer Eſcapes. As for the Subſtance of the enſuing Diſcourſe, I am bold to hope, that upon the ſtricteſt Trial it ſhall be found true, and pleaded for in Words of Truth and Soberneſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Giving a short Account of the Rise, Occasion, and Progress of Deism, *especially in* England, *the Opinions of the* Deists, *and the different Sorts of them.*

THERE is no Man, who makes it his Concern to understand what the *State of Religion* has, of late Years, been, and now is, particularly in those Nations, but knows that *Deism* has made a considerable Progress. Since therefore it is against those, who go under *this Name*, that this Undertaking is design'd, it is highly expedient, if not plainly necessary, that in the Entry, we give some Account of the *Occasions*, and *Rise* of *Deism*, the principal Opinions of the *Deists*, and some other Things that may tend to clear the Matter discours'd in the subsequent Sheets.

It is not necessary that we enquire more largely into the Causes of that general Defection in *Principle* and *Practice* from the *Doctrine* of the *Gospel*, which now every where obtains; this has been judiciously done by others.

Nor will it be needful to write at Length the *History* of *Deism*. This I think impracticable, because the Growth of this *Sect* has been very secret, and they have generally disguis'd their Opinions: And perhaps till of late, they scarce had any settled Opinion, in Matters of *Religion*, if yet they have: But tho' it were practicable, as it is not, yet is not necessary to our present Undertaking; and if it were attempted, would require mo Helps, and more Leasure, besides other Things, than I am Master of.

One has of late written a Pamphlet bearing this Title, *An Account of the Growth of* Deism *in* England. The Author, if he is not a *Deist*; yet has done what in him lies to promote their Cause, by

Growth of *Deism* printed *Anno* 1696.

 setting

setting off, with all the Art and Address he is Master of, those Things, which, he says, have tempted many to turn *Deist*, without any Attempt to antidote the Poison of them.

Reflections on a Pamphlet intituled, An Account of the Growth of *Deism* 1696.

Another has writ *Reflections* upon this Pamphlet, wherein he has sufficiently shown that those alledged, by the former Author, were not *sufficient Reasons* to justifie any in turning *Deist*: But I conceive that is not the main Question. If he had a Mind to disprove the other Author, he should have made it appear, that the Particulars, condescended upon by his Antagonist, had no real Influence into this Apostacy. Whether they gave a just Cause for it, is another Question. I am satisfied they did not. But neither do those *Reasons* of this Defection, condescended on by the *Reflecter*, give a sufficient Ground for it. Nor are there any Reasons that can justifie any in relinquishing *Christianity*. The Inquiry in this Case is not what just Grounds have the *Deists* to warrand them in, or engage them to this Defection: For all Christians own it impossible they should have any. But the Question is, What has given Occasion to any, thus to fall off from *our Religion*. Now I conceive both these Writers have hit upon several of the *true Reasons* of this; tho' the first is apparently guilty of *deep Imprudence*, I wish I might not say, *Malice* against Christianity, in proposing those Temptations, with all the Advantage he could give them, and that without any Antidote: For which and other Faults he has been justly, tho' modestly, censur'd by the *Reflecter*.

Albeit both of them have given some Account of this Matter; yet, I conceive so much has not been said, as may supersede a further Inquiry, or make us despair of observing not a few Things that have not had an inconsiderable Influence, which are overlook'd by both. Wherefore we shall in few Words propose our Opinion of this Matter. And in delivering it, we shall not pursue the Design of any *Party*, but make it evident that all *Parties* have had their own Accession to the *Growth* of this *Evil*; tho' I am sensible that this Account will fall heavy upon a *Set* of Men in particular, who have of late Years claim'd the Name of the *Church of England*, tho' unjustly, if we take her *Homilies*, *Articles*, and the consentient Judgment of her renowned Bishops from the Time of the *Reformation* to Bishop *Laud*'s Time, for the Standard of her *Doctrine*: I see no Reason

See Bishop of Sarum *his Explanation of the* 39 *Articles on Art.* 17. *Page* 168.

Reason why we ought not. I premis'd this to avoid any Suspicion of a Design to brand the *Church of England*, with an Accession to the *Growth of Deism*. And even in speaking of that *Set* of Men, whom I take to be principally guilty, I would not be understood to speak so much of the *Design* of the *Men*, as of the *native Tendency* of their *Doctrine* and *Practices*.

The many groundless, nay ridiculous Pretences to *Revelation*, and bold Impostures of the *Church* of *Rome*, and of those who have supported that Interest; their Impudence in obtruding upon the World, Doctrines cross to *Reason* and *Sense*, and Principles of *Morality* subversive of the whole *Law of Nature*: Their scandalous Endeavours to bespatter the *Scriptures*, and weaken their Authority, on Purpose to bring them into Discredit; to make Way for the design'd Advancement of their *wild Traditions* into an Equality with them; and to bring the World under a Necessity of throwing themselves upon the Care and Conduct of their pretended *infallible Guide*; tho' they cannot yet tell us which is he. Their gross and discernible Hypocrisie in carrying on secular, nay impious and unjust Designs, under the specious Pretences of *Holiness* and *Religion*: Their Zeal for a *Form* and *Shew of Religion*, a Worship plainly *Theatrical*; while the Lives of their *Popes*, *Cardinals*, *Monks*, *Nuns*, and all their highest Pretenders to Devotion have been scandalously leud, even to a Proverb: The *immoral Morality*, *Atheistical Divinity*, and *abominable Practices* of the *Jesuits*, those zealous Supporters and strongest Props of the *Popish Interest*, but in very Deed the worst Enemies of Mankind, the Subverters of all *true Piety*, *Morality* and *Government* in the World; these, I say, together with many other Evils of a like Nature, every where observable in that Church, have been, for a very long Time, too evident and gross to be deny'd, or hid from Persons of any tolerable Sagacity, living among them. And, by the Observation of those and the like Evils, continu'd in, approv'd, justify'd and adher'd unto; and the Cruelty of that Church, in destroying all those, who would not receive, by Whole-sale, all those choking Absurdities, not a few who liv'd among them, and were unacquainted with the *Power* of *Religion*, that was necessary to engage them cordially to espouse the *Reformed Interest*, got their Minds leavened with Prejudices, and furnish'd with specious Pretences against all *Reveal'd Religion*:

Growth of Deism, *Page* 5.

Reflections on it, Pag. 8.

See Jesuits Morals.

Clarkson's *Practical Divinity of* Papists.

Which

Which they the more boldly entertain'd, because they knew it was less criminal to turn *Atheist* than *Protestant* in Places where the *Popish Interest* prevail'd.

Those Prejudices once taken up, daily grew stronger, by the Observation of new Instances of this Sort, and the Constancy of those of that Communion in acting the same Part. And Men of *Wit* and *Learning*, who sooneſt saw into this Mystery, and had no inward Bonds on them, fail'd not to hand about and cultivate those Pretences to that Degree, that many begun to own their Apostacy, if not openly, yet more covertly. this way about the year 1600 & a little after

Not long after the Beginning of the last elapsed Century, so far as I can learn, some in *France* and *Italy* began to form a Sort of a new Party. They call'd themselves *Theists*, or *Deists*, unjustly pretending that they were the only Persons who own'd the *One true God*. And hereby they plainly intimated that they had rejected the Name of *Christ*. They rejected all *Revelation* as *Cheat*, *Priest-craft* and *Imposture*, pretending that there was nothing sincere in *Religion*, save what *Nature's Light* taught. However, being generally Persons too fond of a present Life, and too uncertain about a future, they thought it not meet to put too much to the Hazard, for this their *pretended Religion*. It was a refin'd Sort of *Paganism* which they embrac'd, and they were pleas'd to imitate the *Heathen Philosophers*, who, whatever their peculiar Sentiments were in Matters of *Religion*; yet for Peace-sake, they look'd on it as safe to follow the Mode, and comply with the Religious Usages that prevaill'd in the Places where they liv'd. That which made this Party the more considerable was, that it was made up of Men, who pretended to Learning, Ingenuity, Breeding, and who set up for *Wits*. They pretended to write after the Copy of the new *Philosophers*, who scorn'd that Philosophical Slavery, which former Ages had been under to *Aristotle*. They inculcated that Credulity was no less dangerous in Matters of *Religion*, than in Matters of *Philosophy*. And herein certainly they were not mistaken. But one may justly suspect, That at the same Time, while they pretended to guard against Easiness in Believing, they have fallen into the worst *Credulity*, as well as ruining *Incredulity*. For *none is credulous as an* Atheist.

Much about the same Time, some novel Opinions began to be much intertain'd in *Holland*, in Matters of Religion. The Broachers of them, being Men learn'd and diligent, carefully cultivated them, till they were ripen'd into something very near-akin to plain *Socinianism*, which

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is but one Remove from *Deiſm*. It was not long after this when thoſe new-fangl'd Notions took Footing in *England*, and began to be embrac'd and countenanc'd by ſome *topping Church-men*, who, forgetful of their *Articles*, *Homilies*, *Subſcriptions*, and the Conduct of their Predeceſſors, carefully maintain'd, and zealouſly propagated this new Divinity.

I ſhall not make bold to judge what the Deſigns of thoſe were, who appear'd moſt zealous for thoſe new Notions: This is to be left to the Judgment of him, who *ſearches the Hearts of the Children of Men, and will bring forth Things that are now hid.* But there were not a few Reaſons to ſuſpect that the *Jeſuits* had a conſiderable Hand in diſſeminating them, and that others were their Tools, tho' it's likely they did not ſuſpect this. The *Jeſuits* vaunted that they had planted the *Sovereign Drug* of *Arminianiſm* in *England*, which in Time would purge out the *Northern Hereſie*. This it could not otherwiſe do, than by ſhaking Men as to all *Principles* of *Religion*. And it's a known Maxim, That *make Men once* Atheiſts, *it will be eaſy to turn them* Papiſts. The Jealouſies many diſcerning People had of this, were conſiderably increas'd, when it was ſeen with what Violence the Abettors of this new Divinity appear'd againſt the more moderate Part of the *Church* of *England*, as well as the *Diſſenters*, upon the Account of ſome *Ceremonies* own'd by themſelves as indifferent in their own Nature: While at the ſame Time, they expreſs'd a great Deal of Tenderneſs, if not Reſpect to the *Church* of *Rome*, and made Propoſals for *Union* with her.

Ruſhworth's *Collect. Part* 1. *P.* 475. *Letter by a Jeſuit to the Rector at* Bruſſels, *ſee Pag.* 62. *ibid.*

But whatever there is as to this, 'tis certain that this Divinity opens a Door, and has given Encouragement to that Apoſtacy from Chriſtianity, that has ſince followed, and ſtill increaſes, under the Name of *Deiſm*.

This Divinity teaches us, that no more is neceſſary to be believ'd, in Order to Salvation, ſave what is confeſs'd and own'd by all that are call'd *Chriſtians*. *Dicunt ſe non videre unde, aut quo modo, præter pauca iſta, quæ apud omnes in confeſſo ſunt, alia plura adhuc neceſſaria eſſe oſtendi aut elici poſſit*; that is, *They ſee not how it can be made appear, that beſides theſe few Things, which are by all owned — allow'd, any others are neceſſary to Salvation.* Conſonantly hereto, they expreſly deny any Thing to be *fundamental*, which has been controverted, or afterwards may be ſo. In a Word, they teach that we are not neceſſarily to believe any Thing, ſave what is e-

Remonſtr. Apol. Fol. 12.

Ibi Cap. 24. *Fol.* 276. *and Cap.* 25. *Fol.* 283.

vident

vident to us. And that only is to be reck'ned evident, which is confessed by all, and to which nothing that has any Appearance of Truth can be oppos'd. Now after this, What is left in *Christianity*? The *Divinity*, the *Purity*, the *Perfection* and *Sufficiency* of the *Scriptures*; the *Trinity*, *Deity of Christ*, *his Satisfaction*, *the whole Dispensation of the Spirit*, *Justification by Faith alone*, and all the *Articles* of the *Christian Religion*, have been and are controverted. None of them therefore is necessary to Salvation. Are not Men left at Liberty, without Hazard of their Salvation, to renounce all, save what is common *to Christianity*, with *natural Religion?* And since even some of its most considerable Articles about the *Attributes* of GOD and his *Providence*, *future Rewards* and *Punishments* have been, or may be controverted, why may we not reckon them unnecessary too? The *Deists* have borrowed their *Doctrine of Evidence*, and oppos'd it to the *Christian Religion*.

Oracles of Reason, *Page* 206. *Letter by* A. W. *to* C. Blount.

One of them tells us, *If our Happiness depends upon our Belief, we cannot firmly believe, till our Reason be convinc'd of a* Supernatural Religion: And if the Reasons of it were evident, there could be no longer any Contention about Religion. How little does this differ from that Divinity, which tells us, That GOD is oblig'd to offer us such Arguments to which nothing that has *an Appearance of Truth* can be oppos'd! And if this be wanting, they are not to be receiv'd as *Articles of Faith*. Now if after this, the *Deists* can but offer any Thing that has *an Appearance of Truth* against Christianity, they are free to reject it *in Cumulo*.

This Divinity reduces Christianity to *meer Morality*. Nothing else is universally agreed to, if that be so. *The Supposition of Sin*, (*says one that wore a Mitre*) *does not bring in any* new Religion, *but only makes new Circumstances and Names of old Things*, *and requires new Helps and Advantages to improve our Powers*, *and to encourage our Endeavours*: *And thus* the Law of Grace *is nothing but a Restitution of the* Law of Nature.

S. *Park*'s Defence of Eccles. Poli. Page 324.

And further, Lest we should think this *Morality*, wherein they place the Whole of Christianity, owes its *Being* to the Agency of the Sanctifying Spirit, we are told, That *the Spirit of God*, *and the Grace of Christ*, *when us'd as distinct from moral Abilities and Performances*, *signify nothing*. And a Complaint is made of some, who fill the World *with a Buz and Noise of the Divine Spirit*.

Idem ibid. Pag. 343.

Eccles. Polit. Pag. 57.

Hence

Hence many Sermons were rather ſuch as became the Chair of a *Philoſopher*, teaching *Ethicks*, than that of one, who by Office is bound to *know* and preach *nothing ſave Chriſt and him crucify'd*. *Heathen Morality* has been ſubſtitute in the Room of *Goſpel Holineſs*. And *Ethicks* by ſome have been preach'd inſtead of the *Goſpel* of Chriſt. And if any Complaints were made of this Conduct, tho' by Men who preach'd the Neceſſity of Holineſs, urg'd it by all the Goſpel Motives, and carefully practis'd what they preach'd in their Lives, they were expos'd and rejected, and the Perſons, who offered them, were reflected on, as Enemies to *Morality*; whereas the plain Truth of the Caſe was, they did not complain of Mens being taught to be *moral*; but that they were not taught ſomewhat more.

After Men once were taught that the controverted *Doctrines of Religion* were not neceſſary to Salvation, and that all that was neceſſary thereto, was to be referr'd to and comprehended under *Morality*, and that there was no Need of *Regeneration*, or the ſanctifying Influences of the Spirit of Chriſt in Order to the Performance of our Duty, it is eaſy to ſee how light the Difference was to be accounted betwixt a *Chriſtian* and an honeſt *moral Heathen*. And if any ſmall Temptation offered, how natural was it for Men to judge that the Hazard was not great, to ſtep over from *Chriſtianity* to *Deiſm*, which is *Paganiſm a-lamode*. And to encourage them to it, 'tis well known how favourably many us'd to expreſs themſelves of the State of the *Heathens*: Little minding that the *Chriſtian Religion* repreſents them as *without God*, and *without Chriſt*, and *without Hope*, *Children of Wrath*, and *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*.

I need not ſtand to prove that *this Divinity* is nearly ally'd to *Socinianiſm*. It is well known that they reckon the *Socinians* ſound in the Fundamentals, and therefore think them in no Hazard, provided they live morally. Hence Men have been emboldned to turn *Socinians*. And every Body may ſee, by what eaſy Removes, one may from *Socinianiſm* arrive at *Deiſm*. For my Part, I can ſee little Difference betwixt the two. The *Deiſt* indeed ſeems the honeſter Man of the two: He rejects the *Goſpel*, and owns that he does ſo: The other, I mean, the *Socinian* pretends to retain it, but really rejects it. But I ſhall not inſiſt any further in diſcovering the Tendency of this *new Divinity* to *Libertiniſm* and *Deiſm*, ſince others have fully and judiciouſly done it from the moſt unqueſtionable Arguments and Documents. And more eſpecially, ſince in Fact, it is evident, That where ever this *new Divinity* has obtain'd, *Socinians* and *Deiſts* abound, and many who embrace it,

daily go over to them; which I take to be the surest Evidence, if it be duly circumstantiate, of the Tendency of this Doctrine, to encourge those Opinions, and least liable to any just Exception. And perhaps I might add, That few, comparatively very few, who own the contrary Doctrine, have gone into this *new Way*, where *that Divinity* has not been entertain'd.

But to return, whence we have for a little digress'd, to the *State of Religion* in *England*. No sooner were they advanc'd to *Power*, who had drunk in those Opinions, but presently the Doctrines that are purely Evangelical, by which the *Apostles* converted the World, the *Reformers* promoted and carry'd on our Reformation from *Popery*, and the pious Preachers of the Church of *England* did keep somewhat of the Life and Power of Religion amongst their People; these Doctrines, I say, began to be decry'd, *Justification by the Righteousness of Christ*, which *Luther* call'd *Articulus stantis aut cadentis Ecclesiæ*, that *Redemption that is in him, even the Forgiveness of Sins through Faith in his Blood*; *the Mystery of the Grace, Mercy and Love of God manifested in Christ*; *the great Mystery of Godliness*; *the Dispensation of the Spirit* for *Conviction, Renovation, Sanctification, Consolation* and *Edification* of the Church by a Supply of spiritual Gifts and other Doctrines of a like Tendency, were, upon all Occasions, boldly expos'd, discredited in Press and Pulpit. The Ministers who dar'd to avow them from a Conviction of the Truth, the Sense of the Obligation of their Promises and Subscriptions to the *Articles*, were sure to have no Preferment, nay to be branded with the odious Names of *Calvinists*, *Puritans*, *Fanaticks*, and I know not what.

The *Doctrines* of *Faith* were not regarded as belonging to the Foundation of *Religion*. The *Morality* of the Bible was pretended the only Thing that was necessary, and as much of the Doctrine, as all, even *Socinians*, *Quakers*, and all the rest were agreed in, sufficient: And if any oppos'd this, tho' in civil Language and by fair Arguments, they were sure to be expos'd as Enemies to *Morality*, albeit their Adversaries durst not put the Contest on this Issue with them; that he should be reck'ned the greatest Friend to *Morality*, who was most blameless in his Walk, and shew'd it the greatest practical Regard. They could exercise *Charity*, *Forbearance* and *Love* to a *Socinian* that has renounced all the fundamental Truths of *Religion*; but none to a poor *Dissenter*, who sincerely believ'd all the *Doctrinal Articles*; nay, even a sober Church-man, who could not consent to new unauthoriz'd Ceremonies,

monies; was become intolerable. So that Men, at this Time, might, with much more Credit and leſs Hazard, turn *Socinian* or any Thing, than diſcover the leaſt Regard to Truths contain'd in the *Articles*, own'd by moſt of the *Reform'd Churches*, and taught by our own *Reformers*. This is too well known to be deny'd by any one who knows how Things were carry'd on at that Time and ſince.

Any one that would be ſatisfy'd in the Truth of this, muſt peruſe the Sermons and Writings publiſhed by that Party of old and of late, and the Hiſtories of thoſe Times, particularly Ruſhworth's *Collect. the Speeches of the long Parliament, and later Writings, and they will find Documents no than enough. And they may conſult alſo* Honorii Reggii *his Comment.* de ſtatu Eccleſiæ Anglicanæ.

Further, Whereas *Preachers* formerly, in Order to engage Men to a Compliance with the Goſpel, were wont to preſs much upon them their *Guilt*, the *Impoſſibility of ſtanding before God, in their own Righteouſneſs*, their *Impotency*, their *Miſery by the Fall*, the Neceſſity *of Regeneration, Illumination, the Power of Grace* to make them willing to comply, and that no Man could ſincerely *call Chriſt Lord*, and be ſubject to him practically, *ſave by the Holy Ghoſt*: Care was now taken to unteach them all this, and to ſhew them how very little they had loſt by the Fall, if any Thing was loſt by it, either in Point of *Light* to diſcern, or *Power* and *Inclination* to practiſe Duty. They were told how great Length their *own Righteouſneſs* would go, and that it would do their Buſineſs; they might ſafely enough ſtand before GOD in it; or if there was any Room for *Chriſt's Righteouſneſs*, it was only to piece out their own, where it was wanting. In a Word, the People were told, what fine Perſons many of the *Heathens* were, who knew nothing of *Illumination*, *Regeneration*, for what the Bible was, and how little Odds, if any at all, there was betwixt *Grace* and *Morality*.

And, whereas a Veneration for the *Lord's Day* was a Mean to keep People under ſome Concern about *Religion*, and that Day was ſpent by faithful Miniſters, in preſſing upon the Conſciences of their People, thoſe new contemn'd Goſpel Truths, to the ſpoiling of the whole Plot; Care was taken to diſcredit and bring it into Contempt. Miniſters, inſtead of telling them on that Day, That they were naturally inclin'd to *Sin*, *Levity*, *Folly* and *Vanity*, were commanded to deal with them as Perſons too much inclin'd to be ſerious, and inſtead of preaching the *Goſpel*, they were requir'd, under the higheſt Pains, to entertain them

with a profane *Book of Sports*. And for Disobedience many were ejected. And that they might be taught by Example as well as Precept, a *Sunday's Evening Mask* was publickly acted, where were present Persons of no mean Note.

Rushworth's *Collect. Part* 2*d. Vol.* 1. *Pag.* 459.

Bishop of Sarum *on the Articles, Article* 7. *Page* 152.

Moreover, a State Game being now to be played, the *Pulpit*, *Press*, *Religion* and all were made safely to truckle to *State Designs*, and to the Inslaving of the Nations, by advancing the Doctrines of *passive Obedience*, *Non-resistance* and *Jure-divino-ship* of Kings; whereby Men of Religion were wounded to see the Ordinances of Christ prostitute to such Projects, as were entirely foreign, to say no worse, to the Design of their Institution: And Men of no Religion, or who were not fix'd about it, were drawn over to think it a meer Cheat; and that the Design of it was only to carry on secular Intereſts under specious Pretences.

At Length by those Means and some other Things, which are not of our present Consideration concurring, Confusions rip'ned into a *Civil War*, whereby every one was left to speak, write and live as he pleas'd.

Many who intended no Hurt, while they upon honest Designs, enquir'd into, and laid open the Faults of the *topping Clergy*, did unaware furnish loose and atheistical Men with Pretences against the Ministry: And what in Truth gave only Ground for a Dislike of the *Persons* faulty, was receiv'd by many as a just Ground of Prejudice against the very *Pastoral* as *Priest-craft*, and all who are cloth'd with it, as a Set of self-designing Men.

The Body of the People, who had been debauch'd by the Example of a *scandalous Clergy*, and hardned in Sin by the Intermission of all *Discipline*, which of late had only been exercis'd against the sober and pious, who could not go into the Measures that were then taken, the Neglect of painful Preaching, the *Book of Sports and Pastimes*; and who had their Heads fill'd with the airy and self-elating Notions of Man's *Ability to Good*, *Free-will*, *universal Grace*, and the like, and who now, when they much needed the Inspection of their faithful Pastors were depriv'd of it, many of them, by the Iniquity of the Times, being forc'd to take Sanctuary in foreign Nations. The People, I say, by these Things turn'd quite giddy, and broke into numberless *Sects* and Parties. Every one who had intertain'd those giddy Notions was zealous, even to Madness,

neſs, for propagating them, and thought himſelf authoriz'd to plead for them, print for them and preach them. The Office of the *Miniſtry*, that had before been rendred contemptible, by the Suppreſſion of the beſt *Preachers*, and the ſcandalous *Lives* of thoſe who were mainly encouraged, was now made more ſo, by the Intruſion of every bold, ignorant and aſſuming *Enthuſiaſt*. The Land was fill'd with Books of Controverſy ſtuff'd with unſound, offenſive and ſcandalous Tenets, which were ſo multiply'd, as they never have been in any Nation of the World, in ſo ſmall a Compaſs of Time. The Generality of the People being, by the Neglect of a ſcandalous *Miniſtry*, and the Diſcouragement of thoſe, who were laborious, drench'd in Ignorance, were eaſily ſhaken by thoſe controverſial Writings that were diſſeminate every where, and became an eaſy Prey to every bold *Sectarian*.

Many of the better Sort ſet themſelves to oppoſe theſe Extremes, and from a Deteſtation of them, were carried, ſome into one Evil, ſome into another. Whereby the common Enemy reap'd Advantage, and *Truth* ſuffer'd even by its Defenders. Miniſters who deſir'd to be faithful, by the abounding of thoſe Errors, were forc'd to oppoſe them in publick: Whereby Preaching became leſs edifying, and Diſputes increas'd to the great Detriment of *Religion*.

The Nation was thus crumbled into Parties, in Matters both Civil and Religious, the Times turn'd cloudy and dark: Pretences of Religion were dreadfully abus'd on all Hands to ſubſerve other Deſigns. And even the beſt both of Miniſters and People wanted not their own ſad Failings, which evil Men made the worſt Uſe of. The *Word* and *Providence* were us'd in Favours of ſo many croſs Opinions and Practices, that not a few begun to run into that ſame Extreme, which ſome in *France* and *Italy* had before gone into. And about this Time it was that the learn'd *Herbert* began to write in Favours of *Deiſm*: Of whom we ſhall have Occaſion to ſpeak afterwards.

After the *Reſtoration*, Things were ſo far from being mended, that they grew worſe. *Leudneſs* and *Atheiſm* were incouraged at the *Court*, which now looked like a little *Sodom*. The Clergy turn'd no leſs ſcandalous, if not more than before. Impiety was, as it were, publickly and with Applauſe acted and taught on the Stage, and all ſerious Religion was there expos'd and ridicul'd. Yea the Pulpits of many became Theatres, whereupon Men aſſum'd the Boldneſs to ridicule ſerious Godlineſs, and, the graveſt Matters of Religion, ſuch as *Communion with GOD, Confeſſion of Sin, Prayer by the Spirit*, and the whole *Work of Converſion*: Controverſial Writings were multiply'd, and in them

grave

grave and serious Truths were handled in a jocular Way. The *Scriptures* were burlesqu'd, and the most important Truths, under Pretence of exposing the *Dissenters*, to the great Grief of all good Men among them, and in the *Church of England*, were treated with Contempt and Scorn. The Pulpits were again prostitute to *State Designs* and *Doctrines*; and the great Truths of the *Gospel*, in Reference to *Man's Misery*, and *his Recovery by Jesus Christ*, were intirely neglected by many: And Discourses of *Morality* came in their Place, I mean a *Morality* that has no Respect to Christ as its *End*, *Author* and the *Ground of its Acceptance with GOD*, which is *plain Heathenism*. The sober, and the better Part were traduc'd as *enthusiastical*, *disloyal Hypocrites*, and I know not what. And sometimes, they on the other Hand, in their own Defence were constrain'd to lay open the *Impiety*, *Atheism* and *blasphemous Boldness* of their *Traducers* in their Way of Management of divine Things. And while Matters were thus carry'd betwixt them, careless and indifferent Men, especially of the better and most considerable Quality, being debauch'd in their Practice, by the Licentiousness of the *Court*, the *Immorality* and *Looseness* of the *Stage*, were willing to conform their Principles to their Practice, for which this State of Things gave them a favourable Occasion and plausible Pretences. Men whose Walk and Way look'd like any Thing of a real Regard to *Religion*, they heard so often traduc'd as *Hypocrites*, *Fanaticks*, and I know not what, that they were easily induc'd to believe them to be such. They who taught them so, on the other Hand, by the Liberty they assum'd in Practice, convinc'd these Gentlemen, That whatever their Profession was, yet they believed nothing about *Religion* themselves: And therefore it was easy to infer that all was but Cheat. Besides the *Popish* Party, who were sufficiently encourag'd, while the sober *Dissenters* of the Protestant Perswasion were cruelly persecuted, made it their Business to promote this Unsettledness in Matters of *Religion*. They found themselves unable to stand their Ground in Way of fair Debate, and therefore they craftily set themselves, rather to shake others in their *Faith*, than directly to press them to a Compliance with their own Sentiments. And it is well known they wrote many Books full of Sophistry, plainly levelling at this, to bring Men to believe *nothing*; as well knowing that if they were once brought there, they would soon be brought to believe *any Thing* in Matters of *Religion*.

On these and the like Occasions and Pretences, arose this Defection from the *Gospel*, which has been nourished by many of the same Things, which

which firſt gave it Birth, till it is grown to ſuch Strength, as fills all Well-wiſhers to the Intereſt of *Religion*, with juſt Fears, as to the Iſſue.

Nor was it any Wonder that theſe Pretences ſhould take, eſpecially with Perſons of liberal Education and Parts, who only were capable of obſerving thoſe Faults which gave Occaſion for them: Since the Generality were prepar'd for, and inclin'd to ſuch a *Defection* by a long Continuance under the external Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, without any Experience of its Power, the prevalent Love of Luſt, that makes Men impatient of any Thing that may have the leaſt Tendency to reſtrain them from purſuing the Gratification thereof; to which we may add the *natural Enmity* of the Mind of Man againſt the *Myſtery* of the *Goſpel*.

There was another Thing, which at this Time had no ſmall Influence, the Philoſophical Writings of Mr. *Hobbs*, *Spinoza*, and ſome others of the ſame Kidney, got, one Way or other, a great Vogue amongſt our *young Gentry* and *Students*, whereby many were poiſon'd with Principles deſtructive of all *true Religion* and *Morality*.

By thoſe and the like Means, Things are now come to that Paſs, that not a few have been bold to avow their Apoſtacy from the *Chriſtian Religion*, not only in *Converſation*, but in *Print*. They diſown the *Name of Chriſt*, call themſelves *Deiſts*, and glory in that Name. They have publiſhed many *Writings* reflecting on the *Scriptures*, and juſtifying themſelves in rejecting them.

And we have juſt Reaſon to ſuſpect that, beſides thoſe, who do avow their Principles, who are perhaps as numerous in theſe Lands, as any where elſe, there are many, who yet are aſham'd to ſpeak it out, who bear them Good-will, and who want only a little more Time to harden themſelves againſt the *Odium* that *this Way* goes under, and a fair Occaſion of throwing off the Mask, which they yet think meet to retain. Of this we have many Indications.

Many have aſſum'd an unaccountable Boldneſs, in treating Things ſacred and ſerious too freely in Writing and Converſation. They make bold to jeſt upon *the Scriptures*, and upon every Occaſion to traverſe them. When once Men have gone this Length, the Veneration due to that bleſſed Book is gone, and they are in a fair Way to reject it.

Others have made great Advances to *this Defection*, by diſſeminating and entertaining Reproaches againſt a ſtanding Miniſtry. It is known what Contempt has been caſt upon this Order of Men, whom GOD hath intruſted with the *Goſpel Diſpenſation*, and who, by Office,

are

are oblig'd to maintain its Honour. If this *Order of Men* fall under that general Contempt, which some do their utmost to bring them to, *Religion* cannot long maintain its Station amongst us, when the principal Means of the LORD's Appointment are laid aside, or render'd useless, no other Means will avail.

And hereon further there follows a Neglect of Attendance on the Ministry of the *Word*, which the LORD has appointed for the *Edification of the Church*, and establishing People in the Faith of the Truth, he has reveal'd to us therein. When this once begins to be neglected, Men will soon turn *Sceptical* and unconcern'd about *Religion*.

And further, It is very observable, That many are strengthned in this Neglect, by Principles calculate for this Purpose, while the whole Efficacy of Preaching is made to depend, not on *the Blessing* of Christ, whose Institution it is, or the *Influences* of his Spirit, which he has promis'd for setting it Home on the Hearers for their *Conviction*, *Conversion* and *Edification*; but on the *Abilities* and *Address* of the *Preachers*. Its natural to conclude, That it's better to stay at Home and read some Book, than to go to Sermon, if the Preacher is not of very uncommon Abilities. Which is a Principle avow'd by many, and their Practice suits their Principles.

Besides, which is the true Spring of the former, I am afraid *Ignorance* of the Nature of *Reveal'd Religion*, the Design of its Institutions, and all its principal Concerns, is become more common than is usually observ'd, even amongst Men of liberal Education and the best Quality. And hence many of them entertain Notions inconsistent with their *own Religion*, at first out of *Ignorance*, and afterwards think themselves in Honour ingag'd to defend them, albeit destructive to the *Religion* they profess.

Add to all this, That *Profanity* in Practice has, like a Deluge, overspread those Lands: And where this once takes Place, Love to Sin never fails to ingage Men to those Principles, which may countenance them in the Courses they love, and design to cleave to.

This seems plainly to be the State of Matters with us at present: And we see but little Appearance of any Redress. The Infection spreads, and many are daily carried off by it, both in *England* and *Scotland*. Tho' it must be own'd that *Scotland*, as yet, is less tainted with that Poison: But those of this Nation have no Reason to be secure, since many are infected, and mo are in a Forwardness to it, than is commonly thought.

Having

Having given this ſhort, but I conceive, true Account of the *Riſe* and *Growth* of *Deiſm*, it now remains that we conſider, what theſe Principles are which they maintain. The *Deiſts*, albeit they are not perfectly *one* amongſt themſelves, yet do agree in Two Things. 1. They all reject *Reveal'd Religion*, and plainly maintain that all Pretences to *Revelation* are vain, Cheat and Impoſture. 2. They all maintain that *natural Religion* is ſufficient to anſwer all the great Ends of Religion, and the only Rule whereby all our Religious Practices are to be ſquar'd. The *firſt* of theſe Aſſertions only tells what their *Religion* is not, and expreſſes their Oppoſition to all *Revelation*, particularly to *Chriſtianity*, which has been worthily defended and aſſerted againſt all their Objections by many of late; and I ſhall not much inſiſt in adding to what they have written to ſuch excellent Purpoſe. The *ſecond* tells us what their *Religion* is, and it is this chiefly we deſign in the following Papers to debate with them. They have long been upon the *offenſive* Part, which is more eaſy. We deſign now to put them on the *defenſive*.

They who call themſelves *Deiſts*, albeit they thus far agree; yet are not all of one Sort. I find them by one of their own Number claſs'd into Two Sorts, *Mortal* and *Immortal*. *Oracles of Reaſon* Page 99.

The *Immortal* are they, who maintain a *Future State*. The *Mortal*, they who *deny one*. It is with the *firſt* we are principally concern'd; Yet I ſhall in the ſubſequent Chapter offer a few Things with Reſpect to the *Mortal Deiſts*. And in what I have to ſay of them, I ſhall be very ſhort; becauſe, I conceive, what has already been offer'd, in the Introduction, againſt this Sort of Men, might almoſt ſuperſede any further Diſcourſe about them.

CHAP. II.

Mortal Deiſts *who, and what Judgment to be made of them, and their Sentiments.*

THE *Mortal Deiſts*, who alſo are call'd *Nominal Deiſts*, denying a *future State*, are, in Effect, *meer Atheiſts*. This perhaps ſome

may think a harsh Judgment; but yet it is such as the *Deists* themselves, who are on the other Side, will allow.

One who owns himself *Deist*, thus expresses his Mind, *We do believe, that there is an infinitely powerful, wise and good GOD, who superintends the Actions of Mankind, in Order to retribute to every one according to their Deserts: Neither are we to boggle at* this Creed; *For if we do not stick to it, we ruin the Foundations of all* humane Happiness, *and are, in Effect, no better than* meer Atheists.

Letter to the *Deists*, Page 125.

A further Account of this Sort of Men we have given us by one, whom any may judge capable enough for it, who considers his Way of Writing, and the Account he gives of himself. *I have observed some*, says he, *who pretend themselves* Deists, *that they are Men of loose and sensual Lives; and I make no Wonder that they dislike the Christian Doctrine of Self-denial, and the severe Threatnings against wilful Sinners. You may be sure they will not alledge this Reason: But having read* Spinoza *and* Hobbs, *and being taught to laugh at the Story of* Balaam's *Ass, and* Sampson's *Locks, they proceed to ridicule the Reality of all Miracle and Revelation. I have convers'd with several of this Temper, but could never get any of them serious enough to debate the Reality of Revelation: But a witty Jest, and t'other Glass puts an End to all further Consideration.* These are meer *Scepticks* and practical *Atheists*, rather than real *Deists*.

Growth of *Deism* Page 5.

Now it's to no Purpose to debate with Men of this Temper. If they will listen to Arguments, many have said enough, if not to convince them, for I know it is not an easy Matter to convince some Men; yet to stop their Mouths; and therefore I shall not offer any Arguments: Only I shall lay down a few clear *Principles*, and from them draw an *Inference* or two, which will make it evident, what Judgment we are to make of this Sort of Men.

The *Principles* I take for incontrovertible are these which follow, 1. He deserves not the Name of a *Man*, who acts not *rationally*, knowing what he does, and to what End. 2. No Action which contributes not, at least, in Appearance, to *Man's Happiness* is worthy of him. 3. The *Happiness* of a present Life, which is all that these Gentlemen allow, consists in the *Injoyment* of Things agreeable to *our Nature*; and Freedom from those which are noisom to it. 4. Man's Nature is such, that *his Felicity* depends not only on these Things, which at present he has, or wants; but likewise, on what is past, and what is future, a Prospect

Proſpect of the one, and Reflection on the other, according as they are more or leſs agreeable, exceedingly increaſing his Pleaſure or Pain. 5. The Hopes of obtaining hereafter *the Good* we at preſent want, and of being freed from *Evils* we ſuffer by, mightily enhanſes the Pleaſure of what we poſſeſs, and always the Trouble that ariſes from incumbent Evils. 6. So ſtrong is the Deſire every one finds in himſelf of a Continuation in *Being*, as cannot chooſe but render the Thoughts of *Annihilation* very terrible and irkſom. 7. The Practice of *Vertue*, as it is the moſt probable Mean of attaining *future Happineſs*, if any ſuch State be, ſo 'tis that which tends moſt to perfect and advance Man's Nature; and ſo muſt give the moſt ſolid and durable Pleaſure, even here in this Life. 8. It is malicious to do what tends to the obſtructing *another's Happineſs*, when it cannot further *one's own*. Few Men will queſtion any of thoſe, and if any do, its not worth While to debate with him. Now from theſe we may ſee,

1. It would contribute much to thoſe Gentlemens *preſent Felicity* to believe, (be it true or falſe) that there is a *future State of Happineſs*, ſince the Hopes of immutable and endleſs Bleſs would be a notable *Antidote* againſt the Uneaſineſs of Mind, that ariſes not only from *incumbent Evils*, but alſo from thoſe we fear, and the Inconſtancy of our ſhort-liv'd Injoyments.

2. The Generality of Mankind, eſpecially where *Chriſtianity* obtains, being already poſſeſs'd of the Proſpect of *future Happineſs*, which ſupports them under preſent Evils, arms them againſt the troubleſom Reflections on paſt Troubles, and Fears of the future: And moreover animates them in the Practice of theſe Actions whereby not only their own Good, but that of the Societies wherein they live, is ſignally promoted. All Attempts to rob them of this Hope are highly malicious, and import no leſs than a Conſpiracy againſt the Happineſs of Mankind, and the Good of the Society, wherein they live: And therefore we may ſay aſſuredly, That as thoſe *Mortal Deiſts* are much incommoded by their own Opinion; ſo their Attempts for its Propagation, muſt be look'd on, as proceeding from no good Deſign to the reſt of Mankind.

Here perhaps ſome of them may ſay, That this Opinion tends to liberate a great Part of Mankind, from the diſquieting Fears of *future Miſery*.

To this I anſwer, 1. I believe it true, that their Fears of *future Miſery* are uneaſy to them, ~~and~~ they have but little Hope of *future Felicity*. Their Way of Living allows them none. But theſe Fears pro-

ceed from Conscience of Guilt, and are the genuine Results of Actions, equally destructive to the Actors, and the Interest of the rest of Mankind. 2. These Fears have their Use, and serve to deter from such Evils as are ruining to the Persons, who commit them, and humane Society. 3. While this Opinion liberates a few of the worst of Men, from these Fears, which are a Part of the just Punishment of their Villainies; it emboldens them to run on in these Evils, which ruin themselves and others; and dispirits and discourages the only useful Part of Mankind, by filling them with dismal Thoughts of *Annihilation.* 4. Nor can all that the *Deists* are able to do, liberate themselves or Mankind from those Fears. The utmost that they can pretend, with any Shew of Reason, is, that we have not Ground to believe such a *State.* Will this make us sure that there is none? But of this we have said enough in the Introduction.

By what has been said it is evident, what Judgment we are to make of *this Sort* of *Deists.* Their Lives, Writings and Death shew them to be *meer Atheists.*

Vaninus, when first he appear'd and wrote his *Amphitheatrum Provi-*
Monsieur Bayle's *dentiæ Divinæ*, set out for such an one that *believ'd a*
Great geographical Dictionary. *GOD.* But at Length spoke out plainly that *he believ'd none*, and was deservedly burnt for *Atheism* at *Tholouse*, *April* 9. 1619. He confess'd there were Twelve of them that parted in Company from *Naples* to teach their Doctrine in all the Provinces of *Europe.*

Uriel Accosta wrote for this Opinion, as himself tells us in his *Exemplar Vitæ Humanæ*, which is subjoin'd to *Limburg*'s Conference with *Orobius* the Jew His last Action tells us, what Man he was. After he had made a vain Attempt to shoot his Brother, he discharg'd a Pistol in his own Breast. This fell out about the Twentieth or Thirtieth Year of the last Century. *So they live, and so they die.*

Limburgi *Præfatio & Respons.* Urielis Accostæ *Libro.*

Were this our Design, or if we saw any Need of it, we might give such an Account of the Principles, Practices and tragical Exits of not a few of this Sort of Persons, as would be sufficient to deter the sober from following them. But what has been said is sufficient to discover the destructive Tendency of their *prime Opinion.* And further we shall not concern our selves with them, but go on to that which is mainly intended in this Discourse.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Wherein the Controverſy betwixt us and the Immortal Deiſts *is ſtated and clear'd.*

THE *Immortal Deiſts*, who own a *future State*, are the only Perſons with whom it is worth While to diſpute this Point about the *Sufficiency of natural Religion.* Before we offer any Arguments on this Head, it is neceſſary we ſtate the Queſtion clearly: And it is the more neceſſary that none of the *Deiſts* have had the Courage or Honeſty to do it. And here in the Entry we ſhall lay down ſome Things, which we think are not to be controverted on this Occaſion. And we ſhall, after theſe Conceſſions are made, enquire what ſtill remains in Debate.

1. *Introduction.*

1. We look on it as certain, That all the World, in all Ages, hath been poſſeſs'd of ſome Notion of a *GOD*, of ſome *Power* above them, on whom, in more or leſs, they did depend; and to whom, on this Account, ſome Reſpect is due. This *Heathens* have obſerved. *Cicero*, amongſt others, hath long ſince told us, *That there is no Nation ſo barbarous that owns not ſome GOD, that has not ſome Anticipations or Impreſſions from Nature of a God.* Nor is this any more, than what we are told, *Rom.* 1. 19, 20, *&c.* That the *Gentiles* have ſome Notions of *Truth* concerning GOD, which they *hold in Unrighteouſneſs*; that GOD, partly by erecting a Tribunal in their own Breaſts, which they cannot decline, tho' they never ſo much would, and partly by preſenting to their Eyes thoſe viſible Works that bear a lively Impreſs of His *inviſible Power and God-head*, hath, as it were, forc'd upon them *the Knowledge* of ſome Part of that, which the Apoſtle calls γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, or *that which may be known of GOD.* Whence they all in ſome Meaſure *knew GOD*, tho' *they glorified him not as GOD.*

2. *Conceſſions laid down.*

Cicero *de Natura Deorum. Lib.* 1.

The Stories ſome have told us of Nations that have no Notion of a *GOD*, upon Search are found falſe. And for ſome lewd Perſons, who have pretended to a ſettled Perſwaſion, they are not to be credited.

We

We have sufficient Reason to look on them as Liars, or at least, not to admit them as Witnesses in this Case.

I enquire not whether they were acquaint with the proper and true Grounds of the Obligation of those Laws they own'd obligatory.

II. I do think that the Knowledge of *some of the more obvious* Laws of Nature, and their *Obligation*, hath universally obtain'd. The *Gentiles*, all of them, *do by Nature those Things*, that is, the material Part of those Duties, which the *Law of Nature* injoins; *which shews the Work of the Law*, or some Part of it, at least, *to be written in their Hearts*, since they do Somethings it enjoins. I do not think that this *Writing of the Law* imports *innate Ideas*, or *innate actual Knowledge*, which Mr. *Lock* hath been at so much Pains to disprove, with what Success I enquire not now. Some do think, that while he grants the Self-evidence of a *natural Propensity of our Thoughts*, toward some Notions, which others call *innate*, he grants all that the more Judicious intend by that Expression. Others think that Mr. *Lock*'s Arguments conclude only the Improbability of *innate Ideas*, and that they are to be rejected, rather for Want of Evidence for them, than for the Strength of what is said against them: But whatever there is as to this, neither the Apostle's Scope, nor Words oblige us to maintain them. What is intended may be reduc'd to two Assertions, *viz.* That Men are born with such Faculties, which cannot, after they are capable of exercising them, but admit the Obligation and binding Force of some, at least, of the *Laws of Nature*, when they are fairly offered to their Thoughts: And that Man is so stated, that he cannot miss Occasions of thinking of, or coming to the Knowledge of those *Laws of Nature*. *Homines nasci Cognitione aliqua Dei instructos, haud dicimus:* Nullam omnino habent, *sed Vi cognoscendi dicimus; neque ita naturaliter cognoscunt atque sentiunt, insitam Potentiam Deum cognoscendi, ad Cultum ejus aliquo Modo præstandum*, Stimulantem, *sponte se in adultis Rationis compotibus, non minus certo & necessario quam ipsum ratiocinari, exerturam, unumquemque retinere, Ratio nulla est cur* opinemur, *cum* Sentiamus, says the Learned Dr. *Owen*.

Lock's *Essay of Humane Understanding*, *Book* 1. *Ch.* 4. § 11.

Becconsall *of Nat. Relig. Ch.* 6. § 1, 2.

Theologumen. Lib. 1. Cap. 5. Par. 2.

III. It is unquestionable, and has been sufficiently attested by the Nations, and even by some of the worst of them, that Man has a *Conscience*,

ſcience, that ſometimes drags the greateſt and moſt obſtinate Offenders to its Tribunal, in their own Breaſts, accuſes them, condemns them, and in ſome Sort executes the Sentence againſt them, for their counteracting known Duty, how little ſo ever they know. A Heathen Poet could ſay,

———*Prima eſt hæc Ultio, quod ſe*
Judice, Nemo nocens abſolvitur, improba quamvis
Gratia fallacis Prætoris vicerit Urnam.

IV. We own that thoſe *Laws of Nature*, which are of abſolute Neceſſity to the Support of Government, and Order in the World, and the Maintenance of humane Society, are, in a good Meaſure, knowable by the *Light of Nature*, and have been generally known.

V. We willingly admit that, what by *Tradition*, what by the *Improvement of Nature's Light*, many of the wiſer *Heathens* have come to know, and expreſs many Things excellently, as to the *Nature of God*, *Man's Duty*, *the Corruption of Nature*, *a future State*, &c. and ſome of them have liv'd nearer up to the Knowledge they had than others: For which they are highly to be commended, and I don't grudge them their due Praiſe.

VI. I look on it as certain, That the *Light of Nature*, had it been duly improven, might have carry'd them in theſe Things, and others of the like Nature, further than ever any went.

But after all theſe Things are granted, the Queſtion concerning the *Sufficiency of natural Religion*, remains untouched.

For clearing this, it is further to be obſerved, That, when we ſpeak of the *Sufficiency of natural Religion*, or thoſe Notices of God, and the Way of Worſhipping him, which are attainable by the *meer Light of Nature*, without *Revelation*, we conſider it as a *Mean* in Order to ſome *End*. For by *Sufficiency* is mean'd, that *Aptitude* of a *Mean* for compaſſing ſome *End*, that infers a neceſſary Connection betwixt the *due Uſe*, that is, ſuch an Uſe of the Mean, as the Perſon to whom it is ſaid to be *ſufficient*, is capable to make of it, and the *Attainment of the End*.

Now *natural Religion* under this Conſideration may be aſſerted *ſufficient* or not, according as it's look'd at with Reſpect to *one End*, or *another*: For it is uſeful to ſeveral Purpoſes, and has a Reſpect to *ſeveral Ends*.

1. It may be conſidered with Reſpect to *humane Society*, upon which *Religion* has a conſiderable Influence. *There could never poſſibly be any Government ſettled amongſt* Atheiſts, *or thoſe who pay no Reſpect to a* Deity. *Remove GOD once out of Heaven*,

S. Ch. Wolſeley *Unreaſ. of* Atheiſm, *Pag.* 152. &c.

Heaven, and there will never be any Gods upon Earth. If Man's Nature had not Something of Subjection in it to a Supreme Being *above him, and inherent Principles obliging him how to behave himself toward God, and toward the Rest of the World, Government could have never been introduc'd, nor thought of. Nor can there be the least mutual Security between Governours and Governed, where no God is admitted. For it is an Acknowledging of GOD, in his Supreme Judgment over the World, that is the Ground of an Oath; and upon which the Validity of all humane Engagements do depend,* says an excellent Person. And the fam'd *Cicero* expresses himself very fully to the same Purpose, speaking of *Religion* and *Piety*, he says, ---- *Quibus sublatis, Perturbatio Vitæ sequitur, & magna Confusio, atque haud scio, an Pietate adversus Deos sublata, Fides etiam, & Societas humani Generis, & una excellentissima Virtus*, Justitia *tollatur*. If the Question concern'd this *End*, we might own *natural Religion* some Way *sufficient* to be a Foundation for humane Society, and some Order and Government in the World: For it is in Fact evident, that where *Revelation* has been wanting, there have been several well form'd Governments. Tho' still it must be said, That they were oblig'd to *Tradition* for many Things that were of Use, and to have recourse to *pretended Revelation*, where the *real* was wanting. Which shews *Revelation necessary*, if not to the *Being*, yet to the *Well-being* of humane Society.

De Natura Deorum, Lib. 1. mihi. Pag. 5.

See Amyrald of *Relig. Part. 2. Cap. 8.*

II. *Natural Religion* may be considered in its Subserviency to God's *Moral Government* of the World; and with Respect to this, it has several considerable Uses, that I cannot enter upon the Detail of. It is the Measure of God's judicial Proceedings, with Respect to those of Mankind, who want *Revelation*; and as to this, there is one Thing that's usually observed, *That it's sufficient to justify God in punishing Sinners*, That God sometimes, even here in Time, punishes Offenders, and, by the Forebodings of their Consciences, gives them dreadful Presages of a Progress in his Severity, against them, after this Life, cannot well be deny'd. Now certainly there must be *some Measure*, whereby God proceeds in this Matter. *Where there is no Law there is no Transgression.* Punishments cannot be inflicted, but for the Transgression, and according to the Tenor of a *Law*. And *this Law*, if it is *holy, just* and *good*, in its *Precepts*, and *equal* in its *Sanction*, is not only the *Measure* whereby the Governour proceeds in punishing Offenders; but that which justifies

juſtifies him in the Puniſhment of them. It is needleſs to ſpeak of the *Grant of Rewards* in this Caſe, becauſe with Reſpect to them, not only *Juſtice*, but *Grace* and *Bounty* have Place, which are not aſtricted to any ſuch nice Meaſures in the Diſpenſation of Favours, as *Juſtice* is in Execution of Puniſhments. Now if *natural Religion* is conſidered with Reſpect to *this End*, we ſay it is *ſufficient* to juſtify God, and fully clear him from any Imputation of Injuſtice or Cruelty; whatever Puniſhments he may, either in Time or after Time, inflict upon Mankind, who want *Revelation*. There are none of them come to Age who 1. have not fallen ſhort of knowing many Duties, which they might have known. 2. Who have not omitted many Duties, which they knew themſelves obliged to. And 3. Who have not done what they knew they ought not to have done and might have forborn. If theſe Three are made out, as no Doubt they may be againſt all Men, I don't ſee what Reaſon any will have to implead God either of *Hardſhip* or *Injuſtice*.

There are, I know, who think it very hard, that thoſe *natural Notices* of God and Religion, ſhould be *ſufficient* to juſtify God in adjudging thoſe, who counteract them, to *future* and *eternal Puniſhments*, while yet ſuch an Attendance to, and Compliance with them as Men are capable of, in their preſent Circumſtances, is *not ſufficient* to intitle us to *eternal Rewards*.

But if, in this Matter, any *Injuſtice* is charg'd upon God, who ſhall manage the Plea? Shall they who tranſgreſs and contraveen theſe Notices do it? But what *Injuſtice* meet they with, if they are condemn'd for not knowing what they might have known? Not doing what they were oblig'd to do, and were able to do? And for doing what they might and ſhould have forborn? If all theſe may be laid to their Charge, tho' there were no more, what have they to ſay for themſelves or againſt God? They ſure have no Reaſon to complain. If any have Reaſon to complain, it muſt be they who have walked up to the *natural Notices* of God. But where is there any ſuch? We may ſpare our Vindication till ſuch an one be found. Nor is it eaſy to prove that Man's Obedience, tho' perfect, muſt neceſſarly intitle to *eternal Felicity*. And he who ſhall undertake to implead God of Injuſtice upon the Account of ſuch a Sentence, as that we now ſpeak of, will not find it eaſy to make good his Charge.

Were the Difficulty thus moulded, that it's hard to pretend that thoſe *natural Notices* of God are *ſufficient* to juſtify God in condemning the

Transgressors of them to *future Punishments*, while punctual Compliance with them is not *sufficient* to save those, who yield this Obedience, from those Punishments, which the Contraveners are liable to for their Transgression. Tho' it were thus moulded, it would be a hard Task to make good such a Charge. But I am not concern'd in it: Nor are any, who judge the Persons, who have gone furthest in this Compliance, liable upon other Accounts, because they still own their Compliance *so far available to them, as to save them from those Degrees of Wrath, which deeper Guilt would have inferr'd.*

3. Other *Ends* there are, with Respect to which *natural Religion* may be considered, which I shall pass without naming, and shall only make Mention of that which we are concern'd in, and is aim'd at in the present Controversie, and that is, *The future Happiness of Man in the Enjoyment of God.* This certainly is the *Supreme* and *ultimate End* of *Religion* with Respect to *Man himself.* For that the *Glory of God* is the *chief End absolutely*, and must, in all Respects, have the Preference, I place beyond Debate.

Now it is as to *this End*, that the Question about the *Sufficiency of natural Religion* is principally mov'd. And the Question, in short, amounts to this, *Whether the Notices of God and Religion, which all Men by the Light of Nature have, or at least by the meer Improvement of their natural Abilities without Revelation, may have, are sufficient to direct them in the Way to eternal Blessedness, satisfy them that such a State is attainable, and point out the Way how it is to be attain'd; and whether by that practical Compliance with those Notices, which Man in his present State is capable of, he may certainly attain to Acceptance with God, please him, and obtain this eternal Happiness in the Enjoyment of him?* The *Deists* are for the *Affirmative*: As we shall afterwards make appear, when we consider their Opinions more particularly.

But before we proceed to offer Arguments, it will be needful to branch this Question into several Particulars that are included in it, that we may the better conceive of, and take up the Import of it, and how much is included and wrapt up in this Assertion. The Question, which we have propos'd in general, may be turn'd into those *five subordinate Queries.*

I. *Whether by the meer Light of Nature we can discover an eternal State of Happiness, and know that this is attainable?* Unless this is done, nothing in Matters of *Religion* is done. It is impossible that *Nature's Light* can give any Directions as to the Means of attaining *future Happiness*, if it cannot satisfie us, that there is *such a State.*

II. *Whether*

II. *Whether Men left to the Conduct of the meer Light of Nature, can certainly diſcover and find out the Way of attaining it?* that is, Whether by the *Light of Nature* we can know and find out all that is required of us, in Way of Duty, in Order to our *eternal Felicity*? If the *Affirmative* is choſen, it muſt be made appear by *Nature's Light*, what Duties are abſolutely neceſſary to this Purpoſe, that thoſe which are preſcribed are indeed Duties, that they are all that are neceſſary in Order to the Attainment of *the End*, if they are comply'd withall. Albeit we ſhould have it never ſo clearly made out that there is a *future State of Happineſs*, yet if we are left at an utter Loſs as to *the Means* of attaining it, we are no better for the Diſcovery.

III. *Whether Nature's Light gives ſuch a full and certain Diſcovery of both theſe as the Caſe ſeems to require*? Conſidering what a Caſe Man at preſent is in, to *hope* for an *Eternity of Happineſs*, is to look very high: And any Man, who in his preſent Circumſtances, ſhall entertain ſuch an Expectation, on meer Surmiſes, Suſpicions and May-beis, may be reproached by the World, and his own Heart as a *Fool*. To keep a Man up in the ſteady Impreſſion and Expectation of ſo great Things, *Conjectures*, *Suppoſitions*, *Probabilities* and *confus'd general Hints* are not *ſufficient*. Again there are huge Difficulties to be ſurmounted in the Way to *this Bleſſedneſs*, which are obvious and certain. Senſible Loſſes are ſometimes to be ſuſtain'd, ſenſible Pains to be undergone, and ſenſible Dangers to be look'd in the Face. Now the Queſtion is, *Whether is there ſuch a clear and certain Knowledge of theſe attainable as the Importance of the Caſe, the Streſs that is to be laid on them, and the Dangers that are to be encountred for them, requires?* Certain it is, it will not be ſuch Notices as moſt pleaſe themſelves with, that will be able to anſwer *this End*.

IV. *Whether the Evidence of the Attainableneſs of a future State of Happineſs, and of the Way to it, is ſuch as ſuits the Capacities of all concern'd?* Every Man has a Concernment in this Matter. The *Deiſts* enquire after a *Religion* that is able to *ſave all*, whereof every Man, if he but pleaſe, may have the *eternal Advantage*. Now then the Queſtion is, Whether the Caſe is ſo ſtated, as that every Man, who is in earneſt, if he has but the Uſe of Reaſon, however ſhallow his Capacity is, how great ſoever his inevitable Intanglements and Hinderances from cloſs Application are, may attain to this Certainty, about this End and the Way to it? For it muſt be allow'd that there is a vaſt Difference among Men as to Capacity. Men are no more of one Meaſure in Point of *intellectual Abilities*, than in *Stature*. That may be out of the Reach of one, which another may eaſily attain to. Now, may as much be certainly

known by the meaneſt Capacity as is neceſſary for him to know? Again, all Men have not alike Leiſure. That may be impoſſible to me, if I am a poor Man, oblig'd to work hard to earn my own and Family's Bread, which would not be ſo if I had Leiſure and Opportunity to follow my Studies. Now, if theſe Diſcoveries, both as to their Truth, Certainty and Suitableneſs are not ſuch as the meaneſt, notwithſtanding of any *inevitable* Hinderances he may be under, may reach, they will not anſwer *the End.*

V. *Whether*, ſuppoſing all the former, *every Man, however ſurrounded with Temptations, and enveigled with corrupt Inclinations, or other Hinderances, which he cannot evite, is yet able, without any Supply of ſupernatural Strength, to comply ſo far with all thoſe Duties, as is abſolutely needful in Order to obtain this eternal Happineſs?* Whatever our Knowledge is, we are not the better for it, unleſs we are able to yield a practical Compliance.

The *Deiſts* have the *Affirmative* of all theſe Queſtions to make good. How they acquit themſelves in this, we ſhall ſee afterwards. The Task, as any one may ſee, is ſufficiently difficult. And I do not know, that any one of them who has yet wrote hath given any Evidence that they underſtood the State of the Queſtion in its full Extent. They huddle it up in the Dark, that the Weakneſs of their Proofs may not appear. And perhaps they are not willing to apply their Thoughts ſo cloſely to the Subject, as is requiſite, in Order to take up the true State of the Controverſy.

The more remiſs and careleſs they have been this Way, we had ſo much the more to do to ſtate *the Queſtion* truly betwixt us and them. And having done this, we ſhall next proceed to make good our Part of it.

A *Negative* is not eaſily proven, which puts us at ſome Loſs. It has been deny'd that it can in ſome Caſes be proven. But we hope, in this Caſe, we are able to offer ſuch Reaſons as will juſtifie us in holding the *Negative* in this Debate. And we ſhall ſee next whether they are able to demonſtrate the *Affirmative*, and offer as good Reaſons for it, as we ſhall give againſt it. And it is but Reaſon that they ſhould offer better in a Matter of ſo great Concern.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Proving the Inſufficiency of natural Religion from the Inſufficiency of its Diſcoveries of a Deity.

THO it belongs to the Aſſerters of the *Sufficiency of natural Religion*, to juſtifie by Argument their Aſſertion, and we who are upon the *Negative*, might ſuperſede any further Debate, until ſuch Time, as we ſee how they can acquit themſelves here; yet Truth not Triumph, being the Deſign of our engaging in the Conteſt, that none may think we are without Reaſon in our Denial, and that we put them upon the Proof, only to difficult them, we ſhall now by ſome Arguments endeavour to evince the *Inſufficiency* of *natural Religion*.

1. *Proof belongs to the* Deiſts *the Affirmers: But this Advantage waved.*

The firſt Argument I ſhall improve to this Purpoſe is deduc'd from the *Inſufficiency* of thoſe *Diſcoveries*, which the *Light of Nature* is able to make of GOD. Nothing is more plain than this, that *Religion* is founded upon the *Knowledge* of the *Deity*; and that our Regard for him will be anſwerable to the Knowledge we have of him. That Religion therefore which is defective here, is lame with a Witneſs: And if *Nature*'s *Light* cannot afford *ſuch Notices* of the *Deity*, as are ſufficient or neceſſary to beget and maintain *Religion* amongſt Men, then, it can never with any rational Man be allowed *ſufficient* to direct Men in *Religion*.

2. *The firſt Argument propoſed.*

Now, for clearing this Argument, ſeveral Things are to be diſcours'd. And firſt of all, it is requiſite, that we ſtate ſuch a Notion of *Religion* in general, as may be allow'd, to paſs with all, who are, or can reaſonably be ſuppos'd, competent Judges in ſuch Matters. *Religion* then, in general may be juſtly ſaid to import *that Veneration, Reſpect or Regard, which is due from the rational Creature, in his whole Courſe or Life, to the ſupreme ſupereminently excellent Being, his Creator, Preſerver, LORD or Governour and Benefactor.*

3. *The Argument illuſtrate, Religion what it is.*

The

The *Actions* of the rational Creature, which may come under the Notion of *Religion*, are of Two Sorts: Some of them, do directly, properly and immediately import a Regard or Respect to GOD as their *End*: Which they are immediately and properly design'd to express: Such Acts are called *Acts of Worship*. And *Religion* is more eminently thought to consist in these, and that not without Reason. Yea, by some it is wholly, and against all Reason, confin'd to them, and circumscribed within those Bounds. Again, there are other Actions, which tho' they have other more proper, direct and immediate *Ends*, on Account whereof they undergo various Denominations; yet they also are, or may be, and certainly should be subordinate to that: Which, tho' it is not the proper, most immediate, and distinguishing *End* of these Actions, yet is the common and *ultimate End*, at which all a Man's Actions should be levelled. Now all the Actions of a rational Creature, which are of this last Sort, as referred to a *Deity*, and importing somewhat of *Religion*, may be term'd Acts of *Moral Obedience*. In so far they are religious, and come within the Compass of our Consideration, as they express any Respect to GOD: And they express and import Regard to GOD, in as far as they quadrate with the *Moral Law*, which is the Instrument of GOD's *Moral Government* of the World; and therefore if they are right and agreeable to *this Rule*, they may be term'd Acts of *Moral Obedience*, to distinguish them from these Acts, which are *solely* and more *strictly* religious, and are call'd *Acts of Worship*.

4. *Religion concerns it self in all our Acts of Worship and of Moral Obedience.*

But to speak somewhat more particularly of this Regard that is due to GOD, it is as evident as any Thing can, that it must be,

1. In its *formal Nature* different from that Respect, which we may allowably pay to any Creature, that is, it must be given on Accounts no Way common to him with any of the Creatures; but on Account of those distinguishing Excellencies, which are his incommunicable Glory. None can reasonably deny this, since it must be allow'd by all, that *Religious Respect* due to GOD, and *Civil Respect* due to Creatures are different, and must be principally differenced by the Grounds, whereon the Respect to the one or other is paid. Now the Grounds

5. *That Regard due to the* Deity *in the one, and in the other must be peculiar, given on Accounts not common to him with any other.*

Grounds whereon this *Homage* is due unto the *Deity*, are, the *ſupereminent*, nay *infinite* Excellency of his Nature and Perfections, and his indiſputably *ſupreme*, *abſolute* and *independent Sovereignity* over all his Creatures, which ſtands eternally firm and unſhaken, as being ſupported by that *Supereminency of his Excellency*, his *Creation*, *Preſervation*, and *Benefits*. Now none of theſe Grounds are, in any Degree, communicable to the Creature: And ſo to talk of a *Religious Worſhip* due to the Creature, is to ſpeak Nonſenſe with a Witneſs.

II. This Veneration we give to GOD muſt be *intenſively*, or as to Degree, not only ſuperior to that which we give to any Creature, but even *ſupreme*. It is not enough, that we love GOD on Accounts peculiar to him; but we muſt love him with a Love ſuperior to that which we give any Creature, and *anſwerable* to thoſe Accounts, whereon we do love him: And the like may be ſaid as to other Inſtances. There is no Need of inſiſting in the Proof of this. Would our King be pleas'd, if we paid him no more Reſpect, than we do his Servant? Is the Diſtance betwixt God and the higheſt Creature leſs conſiderable, than that which is betwixt a King and his meaneſt Subject? Nay, is it not infinitely more? How can it then reaſonably be expected that the ſame Degree of Reſpect we pay to the Creatures, will find Acceptance, or anſwer the Duty we owe to the glorious and ever bleſſed LORD GOD? *In Degree ſuperior to that we pay to any other, and*

III. This Veneration muſt be *extenſively* ſuperior to that pay'd to any of the Creatures. Our Regard to the *Deity*, muſt not be confin'd to one Sort of our Actions; thoſe, for Inſtance, which are *Religious in a ſtrict Senſe*, or more plainly, *Acts of Worſhip*. But it muſt run through every Action of our Life, inward and outward. Every Action is a Dependent of God's, and owes him Homage. It is otherwiſe with Men; for to one Sort of Men, we may owe Reſpect, in one Sort of our Actions, and owe them none in another. A Child, in filial Duties, owes his Father *Reſpect*; as a Subject, he owes his Governour *Reverence*; and ſo of other Inſtances of alike Nature: But to no one Creature is he, in *all Reſpects*, ſubject, or oblig'd by every Action to expreſs any Regard: And the Reaſon is plain, he is ſubject to none of them in *all Reſpects*, wherein he is capable of Acting. But, with Reſpect to God, the Matter is quite otherwiſe: Whatever he has, is from God, and to him he is in *all reſpects* ſubject; *univerſal in its Extent as reaching to every Moral Action.*

subject; on him he every Way depends. The Power your Father has over you, he derives from GOD, & it is GOD that binds the Duties you are to pay your Father on you; and therefore GOD is to be own'd as *Supreme*, even in every Act of Duty, you perform to your Father, your King, your Neighbour or your selves: For you are in all Respects *His*, while ye are subordinate on various Accounts to others; yet still GOD is in every Regard *Supreme* and *Sovereign Lord* and *Disposer* of you and your Actions, and therefore a Regard you owe him, in every Thing you think, speak or do. I think this plain enough.

I hope this Account of the *Nature of Religion* in general, will not be found liable to any considerable Exceptions, it being no other, than such as the first View of the Nature of the Thing offers to any that seriously considers it. And from this Account it is evident, *That Religion is founded on the Knowledge of a Deity.* A *blind Devotion* that is begot and maintain'd either by profound Ignorance of GOD, or confus'd Notions of him, answers neither Man's Nature, which is rational, and requires that he proceed in all his Actions, especially those of most Moment, *rationally*, that is, with Knowledge and Willingness; nor will it obtain Acceptance, as that which answers his Duty, whereby he is oblig'd to serve GOD with the best and in the highest Way his Faculties admit him. The contrary Supposition of *Papists* is a scandalous Reproach to the *Nature*, both of *GOD* and *Man*; and an Engine suited only unto the selfish Design of the villainous Priests, who, that they may have the Conduct of Mens Souls, and so the Management of their Estates, have endeavour'd to hood-wink Man, and make him brutish, where he should be most rational; and that they may have *the best*, they make him present GOD with *the Blind* and *the Lame*, which his *Soul abhors.*

This being, in general, clear, That *the Knowledge of GOD is the Foundation of all acceptable Religion*, it is now proper to enquire *what Discoveries* of God are requisite to bring Man to such a *Religion*, as has been above describ'd, and to keep him up in the Practice of it. Now if we look seriously into this Matter, I think we may lay down the following Positions, as clear beyond rational Contradiction.

1. That *a particular Knowledge of GOD is requisite to this Purpose*, to beget and maintain this Reverence for the *Deity*, which is his undoubted due. It is not enough that we have some general Notions, however extensive. To conceive of GOD in the general, that he is the *best* and *greatest of Beings*, *optimus maximus*, is not enough. The Reason is obvious: We must have in every Sort of Actions, nay, in each particular Action,

Action, that Knowledge, which may influence and guide us to that Reſpect, which is due to him, in that Sort of Actions, or that particular one; but this general Notion having no more Reſpect to one than another, will not do. It directs us no more in one than another, unleſs the Particulars that are comprehended under that general be explain'd to, and underſtood by the Actor.

II. That *Knowledge, which will anſwer the End, muſt be large and comprehenſive. This Religion* is not to be confin'd to one particular Sort of *Actions*, but to run through all, and therefore there muſt be a Knowledge, not meerly of one or two Perfections of the divine Nature, but of all: Not ſimply, as if GOD were to be comprehended, but of all thoſe Perfections and Prerogatives of GOD, which require our Regard in our particular Actions, in ſo far as they are the Ground of our Veneration. As for Inſtance, To engage me to *Truſt* GOD, I muſt know his *Power*, his *Care* and *Knowledge*: To engage me to Pray to him, I muſt be perſwaded of his *Knowledge*, of his *Willingneſs* and *Power* to aſſiſt me in the Suit I put up: To engage me to *love* him, I muſt know the *Amiableneſs* of his Perfections; to engage me to pay him *Obedience*, I muſt know his *Authority*, the *Laws* he has ſtampt it on, and that he has fixed *a Law* to theſe particular Actions, either more *general* or more *ſpecial*. Whence it being evident, That different Actions require different Views of GOD in Order to their Regulation; and all a Man's Actions being under Rule, there muſt be a large and comprehenſive Knowledge of GOD to guide him in his whole Courſe.

III. It being no leſs than an *univerſal Religion* that is to be ſought after, *the Diſcoveries of GOD* wherein it muſt be founded, *muſt be plain to the Capacities of all Mankind*; and that both as to the *Truth* of their Diſcoveries and their *Uſe*. It is certain that all Men are no more of the ſame Meaſure of Underſtanding, than they are in Stature. However important the Diſcovery is, if it is above my Reach, it is all one to me as if it were not diſcovered at all. To tell me of ſuch a Thing, but it's in the Clouds, is to amuſe and not to inſtruct me. There may indeed, ſuppoſing an *univerſal Religion* be ſomewhat of Difference as to *Knowledge* allowed, as to ſome of the Concernments of *this Religion*, to Perſons of more Capacity and Induſtry, and who have more Time; but if it is calculate for the Good of *all Mankind*, the *Diſcoveries* muſt be ſuch, as all who are concern'd may reach, as to all its *Eſſentials*; for the meaneſt have as much Concernment in them as the greateſt.

IV. It is most evident, That *these Discoveries* must be *certain*, or come recommended by such Evidence as may be *convincing and satisfying to every Mind.* Conjectural Discoveries, or Surmises of these Things built upon airy and subtile Speculations, are not firm enough to establish such a Perswasion of Truth in the Soul, as may be able to influence to this *universal Regard*, over the Belly of the strongest inward Byas and outward Rubs.

V. *The Evidence of these Things must be abiding*; such as may be able to keep up the Soul in a constant Adherence to Duty. It is not one Day that Man is to obey, but always; and therefore these Discoveries must lie so open to the Mind at all Times, as that the Soul may by them be constantly kept up in it's Adherence to Duty. If from any external or internal Cause, there may arise such Obstructions as may for one Day keep Man from those Discoveries, or the Advantage of them; he may ruin, nay, must ruin himself by failing in his Duty; or at least, if he is not ruin'd, he is laid open to it.

VI. Upon the Whole it appears, That to found *natural Religion*, or to introduce and maintain among Men that Regard which is due to the Deity, there is requisite such a *large, comprehensive, certain, plain*, and *abiding Discovery*, as may have *sufficient Force to influence to a Compliance with his Duty in all Instances.*

Thus far Matters seem to be carried on with sufficient Evidence. We are now come to that which seems to be the *principal Hinge*, whereon the whole Controversy, about the *Sufficiency of natural Religion* turns; in so far at least, as it is to be determin'd by this Argument. Now this is, *Whether Nature's Light can indeed afford such Discoveries of GOD, as are evinc'd necessary for the Support of Religion?* If it cannot, then it is found *Insufficient*; if it can, then *natural Religion* is thus far acquit from the Charge laid against it. Now to attempt the Decision of this Question successfully, it is necessary that we state it right. It is not then the Question, Whether *in Nature* there is *sufficient objective Light*, as the Schools barbarously speak, that is, Whether in the Works of *Creation* and *Providence*, which lie open to our View, or are the Object of our Contemplation, there are such Prints of GOD, which if they were all fully understood by us, are *sufficient* to this Purpose? For the Question is not concerning the Works of GOD without us, but concerning us. The plain Question is this, *Whether Man can from those Works of GOD alone, without Help of Revelation, obtain such a Knowledge of God, as is sufficient to the Purpose mentioned?*

Now

Now the Queſtion being concerning *our Power*, or rather the *Extent* of *our Power*, I know but four Ways that can be thought upon to come to a Point about it: Either,

1. By *Divine Revelation* we may be inform'd what *Nature's Light* unaſſiſted can do. We would willingly put the Matter on this Iſſue: Our Adverſaries will not; ſo we ſhall leave it. Or,

2. Some apprehend that the Way to decide this, is, to take our Meaſures from the *Nature of GOD*; and to enquire, When GOD was to make or did frame Man, with what *Powers* it was proper for him to endue him? or, with what *Extent of Power*, conſidering the infinite Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Power of the Creator. This Way the *Deiſts* would go. But 1. It ſeems a little preſumptuous for us to preſcribe, or meaſure what was fit for GOD to do, by what appears to us fit to have been done. For when we have ſoar'd as high as we can, we muſt fall down again; for GOD's Counſels are too deep for us, and if we ſhould think this or that fit for GOD, yet he having a more full View of Things, may think quite the contrary; and thus all that we can come to here in this Way, is but a weak and preſumptuous Conjecture. 2. If in Fact, what we think fit, or conjecture fit for GOD to have done, it be evident that GOD has not done, that he has given no ſuch *Power* or *Extent of it*, as we judge neceſſary, our Judgment is not only weakly founded, but plainly falſe; yea, and impious to boot; for if GOD has done otherwiſe, it is certain the Way we preſcrib'd was not beſt, nor can we hold by our own Apprehenſion, whatever *Shews* it is built on, without an implicite Charge of Folly againſt God. 3. Whatever we may pretend the Wiſdom of GOD requires to be done for, or given to Man, if by no divine Act, there is any Evidence that he has ſo done, tho' there be no Proof of his having done the contrary, yet it weakens the Evidence of all we can ſay, if the Thing is ſuch in its Nature, as would be known by Experience, if exiſtent; becauſe, in that Caſe, the whole Streſs of our Argument leans upon a Suppoſition that we are capable of judging of the Wiſdom of GOD, while it is certain, we have not all thoſe Circumſtances under our View which may make it really fit to act this Way, rather than that, or that Way rather than this, which on the other Hand he certainly has. This Way then we cannot decide the Caſe.

3. We may immediately perhaps judge of the *Extent of Man's Ability* in this Sort, by *a direct Enquiry into the Nature of the Powers*. But this Way is as uncertain as the former: For there is no Agreement a-

mongſt the moſt Judicious about the *Nature of thoſe Powers*; without endleſs Controverſies. And all that are really judicious own ſuch Darkneſs in this Matter, that will not allow them to pretend themſelves capable to decide the Queſtion this Way. It is little we know of the *Nature* or *Powers* or *Actings* of Spirits: Nor do I believe that ever any Perſon that underſtands will pretend to decide the Controverſie this Way. Wherefore,

4. We muſt upon the Whole give over the Buſineſs, or enquire into the Extent of our Abilitie by *Experience*; and judge what Man can do by what he has done. If not one has made ſufficient Diſcoveries of GOD, it is raſh to ſay that any one can by the *meer Light of Nature* make them: More eſpecially it will appear ſo, if we conſider, That all Mankind muſt be pretended equally capable of theſe Diſcoveries, which concern their own Practice. It is ſtrange to pretend that all are capable of doing that which none has done. Further, theſe Diſcoveries are not of that Sort that may be ſufficient to anſwer their End, if one in one Age ſhall make ſome Steps toward them, and another afterwards improve them: But it is neceſſary that every one, in every Age and at every Period of his Life, have exact Acquaintance with them, in ſo far as is needful to regulate his Practice in that Period of his Life. When I am in one Station, I muſt either fail in the Reſpect due to GOD, and ſo lay my ſelf open to *Juſtice*, or I muſt know as much of GOD, as is requiſite to influence a due Regard in that Station, or that Part of my Life that now runs; and therefore an univerſal Defect as to thoſe Diſcoveries, muſt inevitably overthrow the *pretended Ability* of Man to make thoſe Diſcoveries, and conſequently the *Sufficiency of Nature's Light* to beget or maintain Religion, which cannot be ſupported without them.

Now for clearing this Matter, it is to be conſidered, That what we are upon is a *Negative*, and it belongs to thoſe who affirm *Man able to make ſuch Diſcoveries of GOD*, to ſhow by whom, and where theſe Diſcoveries have been made, or to produce thoſe *Notices* of GOD that are built on the *meer Light of Nature*, that are *ſufficient* to this Purpoſe. Now none of them dare pretend this has been done, or, at leaſt, ſhew who has done it, or make the Attempt themſelves; and therefore we might take it as confeſt, that it is not to be done.

But if it is ſtill pretended, That this has been done, tho' without telling us by whom, or pointing to theſe Diſcoveries where we may find them,

I anſwer, How ſhall we know this? May we know it by the Effects of it, in the Lives of thoſe, who either have had no other Light, ſave that of *Nature*, as it was with the *Philoſophers* of old before Chriſt, or who own none other ſave that of *Nature*, as the *Deiſts* and others who rejected *Chriſtianity*? Truly if we judge by this Rule, we are ſure the *Negative* will be much confirm'd; for it is plain that thoſe Notions of a GOD, which were intertain'd by the *Philoſophers* of old, influenc'd none of them *to glorifie him as GOD*. The *vulgar Heathens* were void of any Reſpect to the *True GOD*; nay, by the Whole of their Practice bewrayed the profoundeſt Ignorance, and moſt contemptuous Diſregard of him. The *Philoſophers*, not one of them excepted, whatever *Notions* they had of a Deity, and whatever Length ſome of them went in *Morality, upon other Inducements*, yet ſhew'd nothing like to that *peculiar, high and extenſive Reſpect to the One true GOD*, which we now enquire after. We may bid a Defiance to the *Deiſts*, to ſhew us any Thing like it in the Practice even of a *Socrates*, a *Plato*, a *Seneca*, or any others of them. Their Vertue was plainly built upon another Bottom. It has been judiciouſly obſerv'd by one of late, That there was little Notice taken of GOD in their *Ethicks*; and I may add, as little Regard in their *Practice*. Nor are the Lives of our *Deiſts*, or others ſince, any better Proof of the *Sufficiency* of the *natural Notices* of GOD, to beget and ſupport a *due Veneration* for him.

If the *Deiſts* decline this Trial of the *Sufficiency* of thoſe *Diſcoveries* of a GOD, by their Influence upon *Practice*, then we muſt look at them in themſelves. And here we muſt have Recourſe, either to thoſe who had no Acquaintance with the *Scripture Revelation*; or to thoſe who have given us Accounts of GOD amongſt our ſelves; who tho' they own not the Scriptures to be from GOD, yet have had Acceſs to them, for the Improvement of their own Notions about GOD. The laſt Sort might be caſt, as incompetent Witneſſes in this Caſe, upon very relevant Grounds. But we ſhall give our Enemies all that they can deſire, even as to the Advantage they may have this Way, that they may ſee our Cauſe is not wanting in *Evidence* and *Certainty*.

We begin then with thoſe who have been left to the *meer Light of Nature*, to ſpell out the Letters of GOD's Name, from the Works of *Creation* and *Providence*, without any Acquaintance with the more plain Scripture Account of GOD. Now what we have to ſay as to them, we ſhall comprize in a few Obſervations.

I. As

I. As for the Attainments of the *vulgar Heathens*, there is no Place for judging of them otherwise than by their *Practice*. They have consign'd nothing to Writing, and so we have no other Way to guess at their Opinions in Matters of *Religion*, but either by their *Practice*, or by ascribing to them the Principles of those, who in their respective Countries, had the Disposal of these Matters. Which ever Way we consider the Matter, it must be own'd that the *vulgar Heathens* were stupidly ignorant as to the Truths of *Religion*. If we make their *Practice* the Measure of judging, which in this Case is necessary, none can hesitate about it. If we make the *Principles* and *Knowledge* of their Leaders the Standard, whereby we are to judge of their Attainments, and make a suitable Abatement, because Scholars must always be suppos'd to know less than their Masters, I am sure the Matter will not be much mended, as the ensuing Remarks will in Part clear.

II. As to the *Philosophers*, if I had Time and Opportunity to present in a *Body* or *System*, all that has been said, not by one of them, but by all the best of them put together, it would put any one that reads, to wonder, That they, "*who were such* "*Giants*, as an excellent Person speaks, *in all* "*other Kinds of Literature*, *should prove such* "*Dwarfs in Divinity*, that they might go to "School to get a Lesson from the most ignorant "of Christians that know any Thing at all. Any one that will but give himself the Trouble to peruse their Opinions about GOD, as they lie scattered in their Writings, or even where they are propos'd to more Advantage by those, who have collected and put them together, will soon be convinc'd of how low a Stature their Divinity was, and how justly the Apostle *Paul* said, that by *their Wisdom they knew not GOD*. All their Knowledge of GOD was no more than plain and gross Ignorance, of which the best of them were not ignorant, and therefore *Thales*, *Solon*, *Socrates*, and many others spoke either *Nothing* of GOD at all, or that which was *next to Nothing*. And it had been well for others, if they had done so too: What they spoke, not only falling short of a sufficient Account; but presenting most abominable and mis-shapen Notions about GOD; of which we have a large Account in *Cicero de Natura Deorum*.

S. *Char. Wolfeley's* Reasonableness of Scripture Belief.

Cicero, Lib. 1. P. 4. *Qui vero Deos esse dixerunt, tanta sunt in Varietate ac Dissentione constituti, ut eorum molestum sit annumerare Sententias. Nam de Figuris Deorum & de Locis atque Sedibus & Actione Vitæ, multa dicuntur*, &c.

III. Be-

III. Beſides that endleſs Variety amongſt different Perſons, in their Opinions about a Deity, which is no mean Evidence of their Darkneſs, even the very ſame Perſons, who ſeem to give the beſt Accounts, are wavering and uncertain, ſay and unſay, ſeem poſitive in one Place, and immediately in the very next Sentence ſeem to be uncertain and fluctuating. Thus it is with them all, and thus it uſually is with Perſons who are but gropping in the Dark, and know not well how to extricate themſelves.

IV. They who go furtheſt, have never adventured to give any methodical Account. They wanted Materials for this; and therefore give but dark Hints here and there. *Cicero*, who would make one expect ſuch an Account, while he inſcribes his Book *De Natura Deorum*, yet eſtabliſhes ſcarce any Thing; but ſpends his Time in refuting the Opinion of others, without daring to advance his own.

De Natura Deorum, Lib. 2. *An, inquit, oblitus es quod Initio dixerim, facilius me talibus de Rebus, quod non ſentirem quam quod ſentirem dicere poſſe.*

V. They who have gone furtheſt, are too narrow in their Accounts, they are manifeſtly defective in the moſt material Things. They are all reſerv'd about the Number of the Gods. 'Tis ~~truth~~ the beſt do own that there is one *Supreme*; but then there is ſcarce any of them poſitive that there are no mo Gods ſave one. No not *Socrates* himſelf, who is ſuppos'd to die a Martyr for this Truth, durſt own this plainly. And while this is undetermin'd, *all Religion* is left looſe and uncertain; and Mankind cannot know how to diſtribute their Regard to the ſeveral Deities. Hence another Defect ariſes, and that is about the *Supereminency* of the *Divine Excellencies*. Albeit the *Supreme Being* may be own'd Superior in Order; yet the Inferior Deities being ſuppos'd more immediate in their Influence, this will ſubſtract from the *Supreme Deity* much of his Reſpect and beſtow it elſewhere. Moreover, about GOD's *creating Power* their Accounts are very uncertain, few of them owning it plainly. Nor are any of them plain enough about the *ſpecial Providence* of GOD, without which it is impoſſible to ſupport *Religion* in the World.

VI. As their Accounts are too narrow, ſo in what they do own, they are too general. But will this maintain Religion? No, by no Means. But there muſt be a particular Diſcovery of theſe Things. Well, do they afford this? Nay, ſo far are they from explaining themſelves to any Purpoſe here, that induſtriouſly they keep in dark Generals. The

divine

divine Excellencies, unless it be a few negative ones, they do seldom attempt any Explication of: His *Providence* they dare not attempt any particular Account of. The Extent of it to all particular Actions is deny'd by many of their Schools, own'd distinctly by few, if any; but particularly clear'd up by none of them. The *Laws* whereby he rules Men are no where declar'd. When some of them are insisted on in their *Ethicks*, the Authority of GOD in them, which is the only supreme Ground of Obedience, and that which alone can lay any Foundation for our Acceptance in that Obedience at GOD's Hand, is no where taken notice of. The *Holiness* of the divine Nature, which is the great Restraint from Sin, is little notic'd, if not where some of the more abominable Evils are spoke of. The *Goodness* of GOD as a *Rewarder* is not by any of them clear'd up. And yet upon these Things *the Whole of Religion* hangs; which by them are either wholly pass'd over, or mention'd in Generals, or darken'd by Explications that give no Light to the Generals; at least, and for most Part are so far from explaining, that they obscure, nay corrupt them by blending pernicious Falshoods with the most valuable Truths.

——*Doctrinam de Providentia Rerum particulari sive Gratia a Veteribus (quatenus ex eorum Libris qui extant, collegi potest) remissius credi observamus*, Herbert *de Veritate*, P. 271, 272.

VII. The Discoveries they offer are not for most Part proven, but meerly asserted. Notions they are most of them learn'd from Tradition, and they were, it would seem, at a Loss about Arguments to support them. Where the greatest Certainty is required, least is found.

VIII. Where they do produce Arguments, as they do sometimes for the *Being* and *Providence* of GOD in General, they are too dark and nice, both in Matter and Manner, to be of any Use to the Generality of Mankind.

To have produc'd particular Instances for the Justification of each of these Observations, would have been too tedious. Any one that would desire to be satisfy'd about them, may be fully furnish'd with Instances, if he will give himself the Trouble to peruse *Cicero de Natura Deorum*, *Diogenes Laertius his Lives of the Philosophers*, or *Stanley's Lives*; but especially the *Writings* of the several *Philosophers* themselves concerning this Subject. Nor will this Task be very tedious, if he is but directed to the Places where they treat of GOD: For they insist not long

long on this Subject, and the better and wiſer Sort of them are moſt ſparing.

When I review theſe Obſervations, which occurr'd by reading the *Works* of the *Heathens*, and their Opinions concerning God, I could not but admire the groſs *Inadvertency*, to give it no worſe Word, of the *Deiſts*, (and more eſpecially of the learn'd *Herbert*, who was a Man of Learning and Application) who pretend that the Knowledge of thoſe *general Attributes* of GOD, his *Greatneſs* and his *Goodneſs* vulgarly expreſs'd by *Optimus Maximus*, are ſufficient: Since it is plain from what has been ſaid, That *this general Knowledge* is of no Significancy to influence ſuch a *peculiar*, *high* and *extenſive*, *practical Regard* to the *Deity*, as the Notion of *Religion* neceſſarly imports. Of which even *Blount* was, it ſeems, aware, when he confeſſes in his *Religio Laici*, that there is a Neceſſity that his Articles muſt be well explain'd. 2. It is plain that the *Philoſophers*, and conſequently the *common People*, did not underſtand well the Meaning of *thoſe Articles*, or of thoſe *general Notions* concerning God, at leaſt, in any Degree anſwerable to *the End* we now have in View.

I dare ſubmit theſe Obſervations as to their Truth to any impartial Perſon, who will be at Pains to try them, upon the granting of a twofold reaſonable Demand. 1. That he will conſult either the Authors themſelves, or thoſe, who cannot be ſuſpected of any Byas, by their being *Chriſtians*, which I hope *Deiſts* will think juſt; ſuch are *Cicero*, *Diogenes Laertius*, &c. or thoſe who have made large Collections, not meerly of their *general Sentences* concerning God; but of their *Explications*. In which Sort *Stanley* excells. 2. I require that, in reading *the Authors*, they do not lay hold on a *general Aſſertion*, and ſo run away, without conſidering the Whole of what *the Authors* ſpeak on that Head. The Reaſons why I make theſe Demands, are, *Firſt*, Some Perſons deſigning, for one End or other, to illuſtrate Points in *Chriſtianity* with Quotations from *Heathen Authors*, take up *general Expreſſions*, which ſeem congruous with, or may be the ſame, which the Scripture uſes, without conſidering how far they differ, when they both deſcend to a particular Explication of thoſe general Words. Again, ſome *Chriſtians*, writing the *Lives of Philoſophers* and collecting their Opinions, are miſled by Favour to ſome particular Perſons, of whom they have conceiv'd a *vaſt Idea*, and therefore either ſuppreſs or wreſt what may detract from the Perſon they deſign to magnify. *M. Dacier*, for Inſtance, has written the *Life of Plato*: But that Account is the Iſſue

of a peculiar Favour for that Philosopher's Notions in general; and it is evidently the Aim of the Writer to reconcile *his Sentiments* to the *Christian Religion*. A Work that some others have attempted before. To this Purpose *Plato*'s Words are wrested, and such Constructions put on them, as can no other Way be justify'd, but by supposing that no material Points of the *Christian Religion* could be hid from *Plato* or his Master *Socrates*. And yet after all, *Plato*'s gross Mistakes, and that in Matters of the highest Import, yea and such of them, as are suppos'd, generally, to lie within the Reach of *Nature's Light*, are so obvious and discernible, that the Evidence of the Thing extorts an Acknowledgement. To give but one Instance, after the Writer has made a great Deal ado about *Plato*'s Knowledge of the *Trinity*; a Story which hath been oft told, but never yet proven, it is plainly acknowledged, that he speaks of the *Three Persons* of the *Deity* as of *Three Gods*, and *Three different Principles*, which is, in Plain Terms, to throw down all that was built before, and prove that *Plato* knew neither the *Trinity*, nor the *One true GOD*. Finally, general Sentences occur in those Authors, which seem to import much more Knowledge of GOD, than a further Search into their Writings will allow us to believe they had: For any one will quickly see, that in those general Expressions, they spoke as Children that understand not what they say, or at least, have but a very imperfect Notion of it. And tho' this may seem a severe Reflection on these great Men; yet I am sure none shall impartially read them, who will not own it just.

M. Dacier's *Life of* Plato, *P.* 141.

But now, to return to our Subject, this *sufficient Discovery* of GOD not being found amongst those, who were Strangers to the *Scriptures* and *Christianity*, let us next proceed to consider those, who have had Access to the *Scriptures* and liv'd since the *Christian Religion* obtain'd in the World. And here it must be own'd, that since that Time, *Philosophers* have much improven *Natural Theology*, and given a far better Account of *GOD* and demonstrate many of his *Attributes* from *Reason*, that were little known before, to the Confusion of *Atheists*. From the excellent Performances of this Kind, which are many, I design not to detract. I am content a due Value be put on them: But still I am for putting them only in their own Place, and ascribing no more to them, than is really their due. Wherefore notwithstanding what has been now readily granted, I think I may confidently offer the few following Remarks on them.

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I. We

I. We might juſtly refuſe them, as no proper Meaſure of the *Ability* of *unaſſiſted Reaſon*, in as much as it cannot be deny'd, that *the Light*, whereby thoſe Diſcoveries have been made, was borrowed from the Scriptures: Of which none needs any other Proof, than meerly to conſider the vaſt Improvement of Knowledge, as to thoſe Matters, immediately after the ſpreading of *Chriſtianity*, which cannot, with any Shew of Reaſon be otherwiſe accounted for, than by owning that this Light was deriv'd from *the Scriptures*, and the *Obſervation* and *Writings* of *Chriſtians*, which made even *the Heathens* aſhamed of their former Notions of GOD. But not to inſiſt on this.

II. Who have made thoſe Improvements of *Natural Theology*? Not the *Heathens* or *Deiſts*. It is little any of them have done this Way. The accurate Syſtems of *Natural Theology* have come from *Chriſtian Philoſophers*, who do readily own that the Scripture points them, not only to the *Notions* of GOD they therein deliver, but alſo to many of the *Proofs* likewiſe, and that their Reaſons, if not thus aſſiſted, would have fail'd them as much, as that of the *old Philoſophers* did them.

III. It is worthy our Obſervation, that ſuch of the *Chriſtians*, who favour the *Deiſts* moſt, ſuch as the *Socinians* and ſome others, do give moſt lame and defective Accounts of GOD. They who lean much to *Reaſon*, their Reaſon leads them into thoſe Miſtakes about the *Nature* and *Knowledge* of GOD, which tend exceedingly to weaken the *practical Influence* of the *Notion* of a *GOD*. And we have Reaſon to believe that the *Deiſts* will be found to join with them, in their groſs Notions of GOD, as ignorant of the *free Actions* of Men, before they are done, as not ſo particularly concern'd about them in his *Providence*, as many ſuch like Notions, which ſap the Foundations of all practical Regard to GOD.

IV. But let the beſt of *theſe Syſtems* be condeſcended on, they cannot be allow'd to contain *ſufficient Diſcoveries* of GOD: For, it is evident beyond Contradiction, that they are neither full enough in explaining what they, in the general own; nor, do they extend to ſome of thoſe Things which are of moſt Neceſſity and Influence to ſupport *practical Religion*. They prove a *Providence*, but cannot pretend to give any ſuch Account of it, as can either encourage or direct to any *Dependence* on, *Truſt* in, or *practical Improvement* of it. And the like might be made appear of *other Perfections*. Again they cannot pretend to any tolerable Account of the *remunerative Bounty*, the *pardoning*

Mercy and *Grace* of GOD, on which the *Whole of Religion*, as Things now ſtand, intirely hangs. Can they open theſe Things ſo far as is neceſſary to hold up *Religion* in the World? They who know what *Religion* is, and what they have done, or may do, will not ſay it.

V. In their Proofs of theſe Truths, there muſt be own'd *a Want of that Evidence*, which is requiſite to compoſe the Mind in the Perſuaſion of them, and eſtabliſh it againſt Objections. Let *Scripture Light* be laid aſide, which removes Objections; and let a Man have no more to confirm him of thoſe Truths, ſave theſe Arguments, the Difficulties daily occurring from obvious Providences will jumble *the Obſerver* ſo, that he will find theſe Proofs *ſcarce ſufficient* to keep him firm in his Aſſent to the Truths; and if ſo, far leſs will they be able to influence his Practice ſuitably againſt Temptations to Sin. Now this may ariſe, not ſo much from the *real Weakneſs* of the Arguments, which may be concludent, as from *this*, that moſt of them are rather drawn *ab Abſurdo*, than from any *clear Light* about the Nature of the Object known; and hence there comes not *that Light* along, as to Difficulties, which is neceſſary to remove them. And tho' theſe Arguments ſilence in Diſpute, and cloſe the Adverſaries Mouth; yet they don't ſatisfy the Mind. Moreover, ſome, of no mean Conſideration, have pretended, that many of theſe Demonſtrations, even as to ſome of the moſt conſiderable Attributes of GOD, are inconcludent: Particularly they have aſſerted, That the *Unity* of GOD was not to be proven by the *Light of Nature*, nor *ſpecial Providence*: But not to carry the Matter thus far, it is certain that the Force of theſe Demonſtrations muſt lie very ſecret, that ſuch Perſons, who own'd the Truths and bore them good Will; yet could not find it.

Much more might be ſaid on this Head, but I am not willing to invalidate theſe Arguments, or even to ſhew all that might, perhaps, not only be ſaid, but made appear againſt them. But whatever there is as to this, it is certain that the *Diſcoveries* of GOD by *Nature's Light* being ſmall, are eaſily clouded, by intangling Difficulties ariſing from the dark Occurrencies of *Providence*, and the *natural Weakneſs* and *Unſtayedneſs* of *our Minds*, which are always to be found in Matters ſublime, and not attended with *ſtrong Evidence*. And Attention in this Caſe will increaſe the Darkneſs, and force on ſuch an Acknowledgment as *Simonides* made to *Hiero* the Tyrant of *Syracuſe*, That *the longer he thought about GOD, the more difficult he found to give any Account of him.*

VI. They

VI. They muſt, whatever be allow'd as to *their Validity* in themſelves, be own'd of *no Uſe* to the Generality, nay, the far greater Part of Mankind. No Man who knows them and knows the World, will pretend that the one Half of Mankind is able to comprehend the Force of them. And ſo they are ſtill in the Dark about GOD; which quite everts the whole Storie about the *Sufficiency* of the *natural Diſcoveries* of a *Deity*.

VII. It is plain, That there is no ſerving GOD, walking with or worſhipping of him without Thoughts, and ſerious ones too, of him. Now *his Nature* and *Excellencies* are *Infinite*, how then ſhall we conceive of them? Our Darkneſs and Weakneſs will not allow us to think of him as *he is*, and conceive thoſe Perfections as they are *in him*. And to conceive otherwiſe is dangerous. We may miſtake in other Things without Sin; but to frame wrong, and other Conceptions of GOD and his Excellencies, than the Truth of the Thing requires, is dangerous and ſinful; for it frames *an Idol*. Now tho' this Difficulty may be eaſy to leſs attentive Minds; yet it will quite confound Perſons who are in earneſt, and underſtand what they are doing, in their Approaches to GOD. Nor can ever the Minds of ſuch be ſatisfy'd in our preſent State, *otherwiſe than by GOD's telling us, how we are to conceive of him, and authorizing us to do it in a Way of Condeſcenſion to our preſent dark and infirm State.*

VIII. I cannot forbear to notice, as what wants not its own Weight in this Caſe, tho' in Condeſcenſion we did a little wave Arguments drawn from the *practical Influence of Truths*, that however great the Improvements, as to Notions of Truths, concerning the *Nature of the Deity* may of late have been; yet the *Effects* of *theſe Notices* in their higheſt Improvement, have been far from recommending them, as *ſufficient* to *the End* we have now in View. *This natural Theology* has rather made Men more *learn'd* than more *pious*. Where *Scripture Truth* has not been receiv'd in its *Love* and *Power*, Men have ſeldom been better'd by their Improvements in *natural Theology*. But we ſee in Experience, That they who can prove moſt and beſt in theſe Matters, evidence leaſt Regard to *the Deity* in *their Practice*.

I ſhall add one Obſervation more, which at once inforces the Argument we are upon, againſt *the Sufficiency of natural Religion*, and cuts off a pretended Retortion of it, againſt the *Chriſtian Religion*; and it is this: *The Religion*, the *Deiſts* plead for, and are oblig'd to maintain, is *a Religion* that pleads Acceptance upon its own Account, which has

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no Provision against *Guilt* and *Escapes*, as shall be demonstrate hereafter; a *Religion* which consequently must be *more perfect*, and so requires a *more exact Knowledge* of the *Deity* in Order to its Support: Whereas, the *Christian Religion* is *one* which is calculate for Man in his *fallen State*: And the *Fall* is every where in it suppos'd, and a gracious Provision made against *Defects* in *Knowledge*, and *unallow'd practical Escapes*.

CHAP. V.

Proving the Insufficiency of natural Religion, from its Defectiveness as to the Worship of GOD.

THE Argument we are to improve against the *Sufficiency of natural Religion* in this Chapter, might have been considered as a Branch of the foregoing: But, that we may be the more distinct, and to shew a Regard unto the Importance of the Matter, we shall consider it as a *distinct Argument* by it self.

Now therefore, when we are to speak of the *Worship* of GOD, it is not of that *inward Veneration* that consists in *Acts of the Mind*, such as *Esteem*, *Fear*, *Love*, *Trust*, and the like; but of the *outward*, *stated* and *solemn Way* of expressing this *inward Veneration*. That there should not only be an *inward Regard* to the *Deity* in our *Minds*, influencing the Whole of our *outward Deportment*: But that besides, there should be *fixed*, *outward* and *solemn Ways* of exercising and expressing these *inward Actings*, seems evident beyond any reasonable Exception.

1. From the *general Agreement of the World in this Point*. All the World has own'd *some Worship* necessary. Every Nation and People had their *peculiar Way* of *Worship*. 'Tis true, most of them were *Ridiculous*, many of them *plainly Wicked*, and all of them *Vain*: But *this* makes not against the Thing in *general*; only it bespeaks the *Darkness* of *Nature's Light*, as to the *Way* of managing in *Particulars*, that which in the *General* it directs to.

Herbert *de Veritate*, *pag.* 271, 272.

2. The

2. The *Deiſts themſelves own this much*. *Herbert* in his Treatiſe, *de Religione Gentilium*, confeſſes it a ſecond Branch of the generally receiv'd *Religion*, for which he pleads, *That GOD is to be worſhipp'd*. 'Tis true, in *his next*, while he tells us that *Vertue* and *Piety* were own'd to be the *principal Means* of *Worſhipping* him, he would ſeem to preclude us from the Benefit of the former Acknowledgment. But yet he dares not aſſert, That this which he condeſcends on was the *only Way*, and ſo pretend the *Worſhip*, we ſpeak of, *unneceſſary*: But being to hold forth *the Sufficiency of this natural Religion*, he was loth to ſpeak any more of that, which would lead him if he had conſidered it, unto a Diſcovery of its Nakedneſs. But others of the *Deiſts* do own the *Neceſſity* of ſuch *a Worſhip*, and pretend *Prayer* and *Praiſe ſufficient* to this Purpoſe, as he alſo doth in his other Treatiſes, particularly *de Veritate*.

Herbert *de Veritate, ubi ſupra* 272. *Nos interea externum illum Dei Cultum (ſub aliqua Religionis Specie) ex omni Seculo, Regione, Gente evicimus.*

3. The ſame Reaſons which plead for *inward Acts*, peculiarly directed to *this End*, plead for *outward Veneration* likewiſe. If we have *Minds* capable of this *inward Veneration*, ſo are we capable of *outward Expreſſions*; and are under the ſame Obligations to employ thoſe latter Sort of *Powers* to the Honour of GOD, that binds us to the former. Nor is there more Reaſon why, beſides that *tranſient Regard* we ought to pay him in all our Actions, there ſhould be *inward Acts* peculiarly deſign'd to expreſs our *inward Veneration*, than that there ſhould be *outward ſtated Acts*, peculiarly deſign'd for the ſame Purpoſe.

4. *The Nature of Society pleads loudly for this*. Mankind as united in *Societies*, whether leſſer, as Families; or greater, as other Societies, depend intirely on GOD; and therefore owe him *Reverence* and the Expreſſion of it, in ſome joint and fixed Way. *Publick Benefits require publick Acknowledgements*: And this Sort of *Dependence* on and *Subjection* to the *Deity* ſhould certainly have *ſuitable Returns*.

5. It is incontroulably evident, that many in the World, do ſhake off all Regard to the Deity, and walk in an open Defiance to him, and thoſe Laws which he has eſtabliſh'd. Certainly therefore, it is the Duty of ſuch as keep firm, openly to teſtify their *Dependence* on and *Regard* to the *Deity*, which is not ſufficiently done by the Performance of thoſe Things, which are *materially* according to the Appointment of GOD. For what *Regard* to GOD there is, influencing to thoſe *outward*

Acts,

Acts, cannot be clearly discern'd by Onlookers, who know not but *somewhat*, beside any *Regard* to the Authority of the *Law-giver*, may be at the Bottom of all. It is therefore necessary that there be *publick, solemn Actions*, directly and plainly importing our Avouchment of a Regard to him, in Opposition to these Affronts that are publickly offer'd to him.

6. *This Worship* is necessary in Order to maintain and cherish that *inward Veneration*. It is well known, however much we are bound to it; yet the Sense of this Obligation, and that *Veneration* it self to which we are oblig'd, is not so deeply riveted upon our Minds, but it needs to be cherished, and the Habits strengthned by Actings. It is not so easy for Men to do this by *inward Meditation*, who for most Part are little accustom'd to this Way, and can indeed scarce fix their Minds in this *inward Exercise* at all, especially if they have no fix'd Way of exercising it, but are left at Liberty to choose their own Way. *Religion* therefore must go out *of the World*, or there must be *stated* and *fix'd Ways* of exercising it. This is easily justifiable from Experience, which shews, That where once *publick Worship* is disregarded, any other *Sort of Respect* to the *Deity* quickly fails of its own accord.

7. *It is necessary for the Benefit of humane Society.* The Foundations of *humane Society* are laid upon the *Notion of a GOD*, and the *Sacredness of Oaths*, and the *fix'd Notions* of *Right* and *Wrong*, which all stand and fall together. Nor is there any Way of keeping up that Regard to those Things, which are the Props of humane Society, without such a *Worship of GOD*, as that we plead for. This all the *Law-givers* were of old satisfy'd about, and took Measures accordingly.

8. If *Religion* has any *valuable End*, then certainly this must be one main Part of it, to lead Man to *future Happiness*; which cannot with any Shew of Reason be alledg'd to consist in any Thing besides *the Enjoyment of GOD*. And it's plainly ridiculous to suppose, That Mankind can be kept up in any fix'd Expectation of, or close Pursuit after this, if not animated and enocuraged by some, nay frequent Experiences of Commerce betwixt *him* and the *Deity* here. And it is foolish to pretend, That this is otherwise to be had in any Degree, answerable to this End, in any other Way, than in the Way of *design'd, fix'd, solemn* and *stated Worship*.

Now this much being said in the *General* for clearing the Necessity of such *a Worship* and the *Importance* of it in *Religion*; it remains that we prove *the Light of Nature insufficient* to direct us as to *the Way* of it. And this we conceive may be easily made appear from the few ensuing Grounds.

1. The

1. The manifeſt Miſtakes all the World fell into, who were left in this Matter to the Conduct of the *meer Light of Nature*, abundantly evince the Incompetency of *Nature's Light* for Man's Direction, with Reſpect to the *Worſhip of GOD*. Every Nation had their *own Way* of *Worſhip*, and that ſtuff'd with *blaſphemous, unworthy, ridiculous, ungrounded, impious and horrid Rites and Uſages*; of which there are innumerable Accounts every where to be met with. We can no where in the *Heathen World* find *any Worſhip* that is not manifeſtly *unworthy* of and *injurious* to the *Glorious GOD*. Surely *that Light* that ſuffered the World to loſe their Way ſo evidently, muſt be *ſadly defective*. *Their Worſhip* was every where ſuch, even where wiſe Men were the Inſtituters of it, that it could not ſatisfie any Perſon who had any true Notion of GOD, and was the Scorn of the Wiſe and Diſcerning. Nor can it with any Shew of Reaſon be pleaded, That *theſe Defects* and *Enormities* are to be charg'd, not on the *Defectiveneſs of Nature's Light*, but the *Negligence* of thoſe who did not uſe it to that Advantage it might have been us'd: Since it has been above proven, That the only Way we can judge what *Nature's Light can do*, is by conſidering what it *has done* ſomewhere or other; and theſe Enormities did every where obtain. They were not peculiar to ſome Places; but whereever Men were left to the *meer Light of Nature*, there they fell into them.

2. Theſe Ways of *Worſhip*, viz. *Prayer* and *Praiſe*, which are condeſcended upon by the *Deiſts*, and ſeem in general to have the Countenance of *Reaſon*; yet, as they are diſcover'd by *Nature's Light*, can no Way ſatisfy. Be it granted that *Nature's Light* directs to them *in general*, and binds them on us as Duty; yet it muſt be allow'd, that this is not enough; for the Difficulty is, how we ſhall in *particular* manage them to the *Glory of GOD* and our *own Advantage*. The Duty is ſtated in the General, and when we begin to think of Compliance with it, we find the *Light of Nature* like the *Egyptian Task maſters*, ſet us our Work, and *demand Brick*, while yet it allows us *no Straw*. What endleſs Difficulties are we caſt in, about the Matter of our *Prayers* and *Praiſes*? What Things ſhall we pray to GOD, and praiſe him for? How ſhall we be furniſh'd with *ſuch Diſcoveries* of the *Nature, Excellencies, Works of GOD*, and what Things are proper for us, as may be ſufficient to guide us in our *Prayers* and *Praiſes*, and keep us up in a cloſe Attendance on theſe Duties, in the whole Tract of our Lives, without wearying or fainting? Are we, becauſe we know not what is good or ill for us, to hold in *meer Generals*, as the beſt of the *Philoſo-*

phers thought? If so, will the Mind of Man, for so long a Tract of Time, be able to continue in this *general Way*, without Nauseating? Or, shall we descend to *Particulars*? If so, How shall Materials be furnish'd to us for such particular Addresses, who know so little of *GOD's Works*, or our own Wants? Again, Who shall teach us the *Way* and *Manner* of *Praying* and *Praising*, which will be acceptable to GOD? Shall every one's Fancy be *the Rule*? If there be a fix'd Rule, which, and where is it? Again, What Security have we from the *meer Light of Nature*, as to the *Success* and *Acceptance* of these Duties? It will be to no Advantage to except, *That GOD requires of us no more than he has directed us in*; for this is to beg the *main Question*: Were it once granted, That no more is required than what *Nature's Light* directs to, there might be some Countenance for this Plea, *That what it gives no Directions in, will not be insisted upon by GOD*; but this is plainly refus'd, and so the Difficulties remain. Nor is it to more Advantage to pretend, *That the Substance being agreed to, GOD will not insist upon Circumstances of Worship*: For, the Difficulties objected respect not *meerly* the *Circumstances*, but the very *substantial Parts* of these Duties. As to what may be pretended of the *Influence of the Hopes of eternal Life*, toward the keeping up Men in an Attendance on Duties, as to the particular Manner of the Performance of which, and the Grounds of Acceptance, they are entirely in the Dark: This Plea shall be fully consider'd afterwards. And as it is obvious, That no general Supposal of Benefit can for any long Tract of Time keep Men steady in the Performance of Actions, about the Nature and Acceptance of which they are in Doubt; so, it shall be made appear there is no Ground from the *meer Light of Nature* for any *such Hope* of *future Felicity*, as can relieve in this Case.

Hornbeck *de Conversione Gentilium*, *Lib.* 5. *Cap.* 6. *P.* 47.

3. The plain Confession of the more thoughtful, wise and discerning of the *Heathen World* plainly proves this. The Followers of the *fam'd Confucius* in *China*, tho' they own that there is *one Supreme GOD*; yet profess themselves ignorant of *the Way* he is to be *worshipped*, and therefore think it safer to abstain from *Worshipping*, than err in the *Assignation* of *improper Honour* to him. *Plato* in his *second Alcibiades*, which he inscribes, *of Prayer*, makes it his Business to prove, *That we know not how to manage Prayer*, and therefore concludes it *safer to abstain altogether, than err in the Manner*. *Alcibiades* is going to the Temple to pray, *Socrates* meets him, dissuades him, and proves his *Inability* to manage the Duty, of which he is at

Length

Length convinc'd; whereupon *Socrates* concludes, " You ſee, ſays he, " *That it is not at all ſafe for you to go and pray* in the Temple---- I am " therefore of the Mind, it is much better for you to be ſilent.—— " And it is neceſſary you ſhould wait for ſome Perſon to teach you " how you ought to behave your ſelves, both towards the Gods and " Men. To which *Alcibiades* ſaid, And when will that Time come, " *Socrates*? And who is he that will inſtruct me? With what Pleaſure " ſhould I look on him? To which he replies, He will do it who " takes a true Care of you. But methinks as we read in *Homer*, That " *Minerva* diſſipated the Miſt that cover'd *Diomedes*, and hindred him " from diſtinguiſhing GOD from Man; ſo it is neceſſary, That he " ſhould in the firſt Place ſcatter the Darkneſs that covers your Soul, " and afterwards give you theſe Remedies that " are neceſſary to put you in a Condition of " diſcerning Good and Evil; for at preſent you " know not how to make a Difference. *Alci-* " *biades* ſays, I think I muſt defer my Sacri- " fice to that Time. *Socrates* approves; You " have Reaſon, ſays he, it is more ſafe ſo to do, " than run ſo great a Risk. The *fam'd Epicte-* " *tus* was ſo much of the ſame Mind, that he " knew no Way but to adviſe every one to fol- " low the Cuſtom of their Country in Worſhip. Upon the ſame Account *Seneca* rejects all *this Worſhip*. And memorable is the Confeſſion of *Jamblicus* a *Platonick Philoſopher*, who liv'd in the *fourth Century*. " It is not eaſy to know what " GOD will be pleas'd with, unleſs we be either immediately inſtruc- " ted by GOD our ſelves, or taught by ſome Perſon whom GOD hath " convers'd with, or arrive at the Knowledge of it by ſome divine " Means or other. Thus you ſee how much theſe great Men were bemiſted in this Matter, and may eaſily conclude what the Caſe of the reſt of Mankind was.

We have the ſame Account of Socrates *and* Xenophon, *of which ſee* Stanley *Pag.* 75.

Epictet. Enchirid. *Cap.* 38.

Seneca *Epiſ.* 95. Jambl. *de Vita* Pythag. *Cap.* 28.

4. The very Nature of the Thing ſeems to plead againſt the *Sufficiency of Reaſon* in this Point: For it ſeems plainly to be founded on the cleareſt Notions of *Nature's Light*, that the *Worſhip of GOD* is to be regulated by the *Will* and *Pleaſure* of GOD; which if he reveal not, how can we know it? Hence it was that the *Heathens* never pretended *Reaſon*, but always *Revelation* for their *Worſhip*. The Go-

vernours all of them did this. And *Plato* tells us, "*That Laws concerning divine Matters must* "*be had from the Delphick Oracles.*

Plato *de Legibus.*

Much more might be said on this Head, were it needful: But I am apprehensive this is a Point that the *Deists* will not be fond to dispute with us; not only because they are no great Friends to *this Worship*, but because they can say so little on this Head, which has any Shew of Reason: Of which their fam'd Leader *Herbert* was sufficiently aware, when he tells us in his third Article, "*That Vertue is the prin-* "*cipal Part of the Worship of GOD*; whereby he owns, That there is indeed another Part of it, which he dare not name, because he knows not what to say about it.

CHAP. VI.

Proving the Insufficiency of natural Religion, from its Defectiveness as to the Discovery, wherein Man's Happiness lies.

NEXT to the *Glory of GOD*, the indisputably *supreme End* of Man, and of the whole Creation, of which I am not now to discourse; *the Happiness of Man*, is past all peradventure, *his chief End.* Yea, perhaps if we speak properly, except as aboveſaid, it is his *only End.* For whatever Man is capable of designing, is comprehended under this, being either what doth, or at least, is judg'd to contain somewhat of *Happiness* in it, or what is suppos'd to contribute to that wherein Satisfaction is understood to consist. Every Thing a Man aims at, is either aim'd at *as Good* in it self, or contributing to *our Good.* The *First* is a Part of *our Happiness*; the *Last* is not in proper Speech design'd, but the *Good* to which it contributes, and that still is as before a Part of *our Happiness.* If *Religion* is therefore any Way useful or sufficient, it must be so with Respect *to this End.* And since *Religion* not only claims some Regard from Man, but pleads the Preference

ference to all other Things, and demands his *chief Concern*, and his being employed about it as the *main Buſineſs* of his Life, it muſt either contribute more toward *this End*, than any Thing elſe, nay be able to lead Man to *this End*, otherwiſe it deſerves not that Regard which it claims, and is indeed of little, if any Uſe to Mankind. If then we are able to evince that *Natural Religion* is not *ſufficient* to lead Man to *that Happineſs*, which all Men ſeek, and is indeed the *chief End* of Man, there will be no Place left for the Pretence of its *Sufficiency*, in ſo far as it is the Subject of this Controverſie, betwixt the *Deiſts* and *us*. And this we conceive may be made appear many Ways. But in this Chapter we ſhall confine our ſelves to one of them.

If *Nature's Light* is not able to give any *tolerable Diſcovery* of *that* wherein Man's *Happineſs* lies, and that it may by him be obtain'd, then ſurely it can never furniſh us with a *Religion* that is able to conduct him to it. This cannot with any Shew of Reaſon be deny'd. It remains therefore that I make appear what I am now to ſubſume, That *Nature's Light is not able to diſcover wherein Man's Happineſs lies, and its Attainableneſs*. Now this I think is fully made out by the following Conſiderations.

1. They who being left to the Conduct of the *meer Light of Nature*, have ſought after *that Good* wherein Man's *Happineſs* is to be had, could not come to any Agreement or Conſiſtency among themſelves. This is a Point of the firſt Importance, as being the Hinge whereon the Whole of a Man's Life muſt turn; the Spring which muſt ſet Man a going, and give Life to all his Actions, and to this they muſt all be directed. *This*, if any other Thing ought to be eaſily knowable, and if *Nature's Light* is a *ſufficient Guide*, it muſt give evident Diſcoveries of. But, methinks, here is a great Sign of a Want of *this Evidence*: Great Men, learn'd Men, wiſe *Philoſophers* and induſtrious Searchers of Truth have ſplit upon this Point, into an endleſs Variety of Opinions; in ſo much, that *Varro* pretends to reckon up no leſs than 288 different Opinions. May I not now uſe the Argument of one of the *Deiſts*, in a Caſe which he falſly ſuppoſes to be alike, and thus in his own Words argue upon this Point (only putting in, *The Diſcoveries of Nature's Light about Happineſs, or the Evidence of thoſe Diſcoveries* in Place of the *Evidence of the Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion*; againſt which he argues) *If the Diſcoverics of it were evident, there could be no longer any Contention or Difference about the chief Good; all* Oracles of Reaſon, P. 206.

Men

Men would imbrace the same and acquiesce in it : No Prejudice would prevail against the Certainty of such a Good. It is every Man's greatest Business here to labour for his Happiness, and consequently none would be backward to know it. And, if all do not agree in it, those Marks of Truth in it are not visible, which are necessary to draw an Assent. But whatever there is of this, it is a most certain Argument of Darkness, that there is so great a Difference, where the Searchers are many, it's every one's Interest to find, and the Business and Search is ply'd with great Application.

Ibid. P. 201.

2. The greatest of the *Philosophers* have been plainly mistaken in it. They espous'd Opinions in this Matter, which are not capable of any tolerable Defence. *Solon* the *Athenian Law-giver* defin'd them *happy, who are competently furnish'd with outward Things, act honestly and live temperately. Socrates* held, That there was but *one chief Good*, which was *Knowledge*, if we may believe *Diogenes Laertius* in his Life. *Aristotle*, if we may take the same Author's Words for it, places it in *Vertue, Health* and *outward Conveniency*, which no Doubt was his Opinion, since he approv'd *Solon*'s Definition of the *chief Good*; and herein he was followed by his numerous School. *Pythagoras* tells us that the *Knowledge of the Perfections of the Soul is the chief Good.* It is true, he seems, at other Times, to speak somewhat differently; of which we may speak afterwards. *Zeno* tells us that it lies in *living according to Nature. Cloanthes* adds, That *according to Nature is according to Vertue. Chrysippus* tells us, That it is *to live according to expert Knowledge of Things which happen naturally.* It is needless to spend Time in reckoning up innumerable others, who all run the same Way, placing *Happiness* in that which is not able to afford it, as being finite, of short Continuance, fickle and uncertain. 'Tis not my Design to confute those several Opinions. Tis evident to any one, that they are all confin'd to Time, and upon this very Account, fail of what can make us *happy*.

Stanley, P. 26. *Life of* Solon, Cap. 9.

Stanley, P. 540.

Ibid. P. 462.

3. They who seem to come some nearer the Matter, and talk sometimes of *Conformity to GOD*, its being the *chief Good*, that it is *our End* to be like GOD, and the like, as *Pythagoras* and some others, but especially *Plato*, who goes further

Stanley, P. 541.

further than any of the reſt; yet cannot juſtly be alledged to have made the Diſcovery, becauſe we have not any Account of their Opinions clearly delivered by themſelves, but Hints here and there gathered up from their Writings, which are very far from ſatisfying us as to their Mind: Beſides they are ſo variable, and expreſs themſelves ſo differently, in different Places, that it is hard to find their Mind. Nay, I may add, they are induſtriouſly and of Deſign obſcure. This *Alcinous* the *Platonick Philoſopher* tells us plainly enough in *his Doctrine of Plato*, which is inſert at Length in *Stanley's Lives*, *Plato* ſays, "*That he thought the Diſcovery of the* chief Good *was not* "*eaſy, and if it were found out, it was not ſafe to be declared.* And that for this Reaſon, he did communicate his Thoughts about it to very few, and thoſe of his moſt intimate Acquaintance. Now the plain Meaning of all this, in my Opinion is, That he could not tell wherein *Happineſs* conſiſts, or what *that* is, which is able to afford it: Or, at moſt, that tho' one Way or other in his Travels, by his Studies or Converſe, he had got ſome Notions about it; yet he did not ſufficiently underſtand them, and was not able to ſatisfy himſelf or others about them, and that therefore, he either intirely ſuppreſs'd, or would not plainly ſpeak out his Thoughts, leſt the World ſhould ſee his Ignorance, and that tho' his Words differ'd, yet in very Deed he knew no more of the Matter than others. For to ſay, That, upon Suppoſition, his Diſcoveries had been ſatisfying, as to Truth and Clearneſs, and that he was capable to prove and explain them, they were not fit to be made known to the World, is to ſpeak the groſſeſt of Nonſenſe; for nothing was ſo neceſſary to be known, and known univerſally, as the *chief Good*, which every one is oblig'd to ſeek after. To know this and conceal the Diſcovery is the moſt malicious and invidious Thing that can be thought of. And rather than charge this on *Plato*, I think it ſafer to charge *Ignorance* on him. He ſpeaks ſomewhat liker Truth than others, while he tells us, *That Happineſs conſiſts in the Knowledge of the chief Good, that Philoſophers, who are ſufficiently purify'd, are allow'd after the Diſſolution of their Bodies, to ſit down at the Table of the Gods and view the Field of Truth; That to be made like GOD is the chief Good, that to follow GOD is the chief Good.* Some ſuch other Expreſſions we find. But what does all this ſay? Does it inform us that *Plato* underſtood *our Happineſs* to conſiſt in the *eternal Enjoyment of GOD?* Some, who are loth to think that *Plato* miſs'd any Truth of

Ibid. Pag. 192. Cap. 27.

Importance

Importance which is contain'd in the Scripture, think so: But for my Part, I see no Reason to confirm me from all this that *Plato* understood any Thing tolerably about the *Enjoyment of GOD*, either in Time or after Time, or that he was fix'd and determin'd wherein the *Happiness* of Man consists, or that really any such *State of future Felicity* is certainly attainable. All this was only *a Heaven* of his own framing and Fancy fitted for *Philosophers*, for the *being* of which, he could give no tolerable Arguments. And all this Account satisfies me no more that *Plato* understood wherein *Happiness* consists, than the following does, that he knew *the Way* of reaching it, which I shall transcribe from the same Chapter of *Alcinous his Doctrine of* Plato, "*Beatitude is a good Habit* "*of the Genius, and this Similitude to GOD we shall obtain, if we enjoy* "*convenient Nature in our Manner, Education and Sense, according to* "*Law, and chiefly by Reason and Discipline, and Institution of Wisdom,* "*withdrawing our selves as much as is possible from humane Affairs, and* "*being conversant in these Things only, which are understood by Contem-* "*plation: The Way to prepare, and as it were, to cleanse the Demon that* "*is in us, is to initiate our selves into higher Disciplines, which is done by* "*Musick, Arithmetick, Astronomy and Geometry, not without some* "*Respect of the Body, by Gymnastick, whereby it is made more ready for* "*the Actions both of War and Peace.* I pretend not to understand him here: But this I understand from him, that one of *Three* is certain, either he understood not *himself*, or had no Mind *others* should understand, or that he was the most unmeet Man in the World to instruct Mankind, about this important Point, and to explain Things about which the World was at a Loss. When Men speak at this Rate, we may put what Meaning we please upon their Words.

4. It is plain that none of them have clearly come to know themselves, or inform others that *Happiness is not to be had here*, that it *consists in the eternal Enjoyment of GOD after Time, that this is attainable.* These are Things whereabout there is a deep Silence, not so much as a Word of them, far less any Proof. If ever we were to expect such a Thing, we might look for it from those, who have not meerly touch'd at this Subject by the by, and in dark Hints; but have discoursed of *moral Ends* on set Purpose, such as *Cicero* and *Seneca*. *Cicero* frequently tells us that he design'd to enrich his native Country with a Translation of all that was valuable in the *Greek Philosophers*, he had perus'd them for this End, and thus accomplish'd, he sets himself to write of *moral Ends*, which he does in five Books. Here we may expect somewhat to the

the Purpoſe: But if we do, we are diſappointed. The *firſt Book* ſets off *Epicurus*'s Opinion about *Happineſs* with a great Deal of *Rhetorick*. The *ſecond* overthrows it. The *third* repreſents the *Stoicks* Opinion. And the *fourth* confutes it. The *fifth* repreſents and aſſerts the *Peripateticks* Opinion, which had been as eaſily overthrown as any of them. And this is all you are to expect here, without one Word of *GOD* the *Enjoyment of him*, or any Thing of that Kind, which ſavours of a Life after this. *Seneca* writes again a Book *de Vita Beata* conſiſting of 32 Chapters. Here we may find ſomewhat poſſibly. And indeed if one ſhould hear him ſtate the Queſtion, as he does in his *ſecond Chapter*, he would expect ſome great Matters from him. "*Quæramus* "*quid optime factum ſit, non quid uſitatiſſimum: Et quid nos in Poſſeſſione* "Felicitatis æternæ *conſtituat, non quid vulgo, Veritatis peſſimo Inter-* "*preti, probatum ſit. Vulgus autem tam chlamydatos, quam Coronam* "*voco:* What may we not now expect? But, after this, I aſſure you, you are to look for no more Words about *Eternity*, nor any Thing more, but a jejune Diſcourſe in pretty Sentences, about the *Stoicks* Opinion, repreſenting that a Man would be happy, if his Paſſions were extinct, and he were perfectly pleas'd with the Condition he is in, be it what it will. Now after this, who can dream that *Nature's Light* is *ſufficient* to ſatisfy here? Is every Man able to diſcover that which *Philoſophers*, the greateſt of them, after the greateſt Application, faill'd ſo ſignally about, that ſcarce any of them came near it, none of them reach'd it?

5. Nor will it appear ſtrange, that the *Heathen Philoſophers* of old, ſhould be ſo much at a Loſs, about *future Happineſs*, to any one who conſiders how difficult, if not impoſſible it muſt be for any, who rejects *Revelation*, and betakes himſelf to the *meer Light of Nature* to arrive at the wiſh'd for, and neceſſary Aſſurance of *eternal Felicity*, after this Life, even at this preſent Time, after all the great Improvements, which the *rational Proofs* of a *future State* have obtain'd, ſince *Chriſtianity* prevail'd in the World. If *Nature's Light*, now under its higheſt Improvements, proves unable to afford full Aſſurance, and ſtill leaves us to fluctuate in Uncertainty about *future Happineſs*; no wonder they ſhould be in the dark, who were Strangers to theſe Improvements.

That the Arguments for a *future State*, ſince *Chriſtianity* obtain'd, have receiv'd a vaſt Improvement from *Chriſtian Divines* and *Philoſophers*, cannot modeſtly be deny'd. The Performances of *Plato* and

Cicero, on this Point, which were the beſt among the Ancients, are, when compar'd with our late Chriſtian Writers, but like the Trifles of a Boy at School, or the rude Eſſays of a Novice, in Compariſon to the moſt elaborate and compleat Performances of the greateſt Maſters, if they bear even the ſame Proportion. He who knows not this, knows nothing in theſe Matters. Yea, to that Degree have they improven thoſe Arguments, that it is utterly impoſſible for any Man, who gives all their Reaſons *for the Continuance of the Soul after Death*, with their Anſwers to the trifling Pretences of the Oppoſers of this Concluſion, a fair Hearing and due Conſideration, to acquieſce rationally in the contrary Aſſertion of *Atheiſts* and *moral Deiſts*; or, not to favour, at leaſt, this Opinion, as what is highly probable, if not abſolutely certain.

But after all, if we are left to ſeek Aſſurance of this from *unaſſiſted Light of Nature*, that *certainly GOD has provided for, and will actually beſtow upon Man, and more eſpecially Man who is now a Sinner, future and eternal Felicity*; we will find our ſelves plung'd amidſt inextricable Difficulties, out of which the *Light of Nature* will find it very difficult, if not impoſſible, to extricate us. 'Tis one Thing to be perſwaded of the future ſeparate Subſiſtence of our Souls after Death, and another to know in what Condition they ſhall be; and yet more to be aſſur'd that *after Death our Souls ſhall be poſſeſs'd of eternal Happineſs*. It is preciſely about this laſt Point we are now to ſpeak. The Arguments drawn from *Nature's Light* will ſcarce fix us in the ſteady Perſwaſion of *future* and *eternal Felicity*. There is a great Odds betwixt our Knowledge of *future Puniſhments*, and the Grounds whereby we are led to it, and our Perſuaſion of *future* and *eternal Rewards*. Upon Enquiry the like Reaſons will not be found for both. Our *Notices* about *eternal Rewards*, when the Promiſes of it contain'd in the Scriptures are ſet aſide, will be found liable to many Objections, hardly to be ſolved by the *meer Light of Nature*, which do not ſo much affect the Proofs advanced for *future Puniſhments*. Beſides, the Entrance of *Sin*, its univerſal Prevalence in the World and the Conſequences following upon it, have ſo benighted Man, as to any Knowledge, he otherwiſe might have had about *eternal Happineſs*, that now it will be found a Matter of the utmoſt Difficulty, if not a plain Impoſſibility for him to reach *Aſſurance* of *eternal Felicity* by the *meer Light of Nature*, however improven.

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The Pleas drawn from the *Holineſs* and *Juſtice* of GOD ſay much for the *certain Puniſhment*, after this Life, of many notorious Offenders, who have wholly eſcaped *Puniſhment* here; eſpecially as they are ſtrengthned by other collateral Conſiderations clearing and enforcing them.

But, whether the Pleas for *future and eternal Rewards*, from the *Juſtice* and *Goodneſs* of GOD, on the one Hand; and the *Sufferings* of Perſons *really guilty of Sin*, but in Compariſon of others *Vertuous*, on the other; will with equal Firmneſs conclude, That GOD is *obliged* to, or certainly *will Reward* their *imperfect Vertue*, and compenſate their Sufferings, may, and perhaps not without Reaſon, be queſtioned.

That it is congruous, *Vertue* ſhould be rewarded, may perhaps eaſily be granted. But what that *Reward* is, which it may from *divine Juſtice* or *Bounty* claim, it will not be eaſy for us to determine, if we have no other Guide than the *meer Light of Nature*. The Man who *perfectly* performs his Duty is ſecured againſt the Fears of *Puniſhment*, and has Reaſon to reſt fully aſſur'd of GOD's Acceptance and Approbation of what is every Way agreeable to his *Will*. He has a perfect, inward Calm in his own Conſcience, is diſturbed with no Challenges, and has the Satisfaction and inward Complacency, reſulting from his having acquit himſelf according to his Duty: His Conſcience aſſures him he has done nothing to provoke GOD to withdraw Favours already given, or to withhold further Favours. And tho' he cannot eaſily ſee Reaſon to think GOD oblig'd, either to continue what he freely gave, or accumulate further Effects of *Bounty* upon him, or to protract his *Happineſs* to Eternity; yet he has the Satisfaction of knowing, that he hath not render'd himſelf unworthy of any Favour. *This Reward* is the neceſſary and unavoidable Conſequence of *perfect Obedience*.

But this comes not up to the Point. That which the *Light of Nature* muſt aſſure us of, is, That *vertuous Men, on Account of their Vertue, may claim and expect, beſides this, a further Reward, and that of no leſs Conſequence, than eternal Felicity*. Now if I miſtake it not, when the Promiſe of GOD, which cannot be known without *Revelation*, is laid aſide, the *meer Light of Nature* will find it difficult to fix upon ſolid Grounds, for any Aſſurance as to this. Many thorny Difficulties muſt be got through. Not a few perplexing Queſtions muſt be ſolv'd. If it is ſaid, That the *Juſtice* of GOD neceſſarly obliges him, beſides that *Reward* neceſſarly reſulting from *perfect Obedience*, of which above,

further to recompence, even the most exact and perfect Performance of our Duty, antecedently to any Promise given to that Effect with *future* and *eternal Felicity*; it may be enquired, How it shall be made appear that *Vertue*, suppose it as perfect as you will, can be said to *merit*, and to *merit so great a Reward?* May not GOD, without *Injustice*, turn to *Nothing* an innocent Creature? Sure I am, no mean nor incompetent Judges have thought so. Where is the *Injustice* of removing or taking away what he freely gave, and promised not to continue? Is it modest or safe for us, without the most convincing Evidences of the Inconsistency of the Thing, to limit the Power of GOD, or put a *Cannot* on the Almighty? And does not the very *Possibility* of the *Annihilation* of an innocent Creature, in a Consistency with *Justice*, tho' GOD, for other Reasons, should never think fit to do it, intirely enervate this Plea? If GOD without *Injustice* may take away the *Being* of an innocent Creature, how is it possible to evince, That, in *Justice*, he must reward it with *eternal Happiness?* Again, if we may, for our *Vertue*, claim *eternal Felicity*, as due in *Justice*, may it not be enquir'd what Exercise of *Vertue*, for how long a Time continu'd, is *sufficient* to give us this Title to *eternal Rewards?* If the *Bounty* and *Goodness* of GOD is insisted on, as the Ground of this Claim, the Plea from *Justice* seems deserted. And here again it may be enquir'd whether the *Goodness* of GOD is necessary in its Egress? Whether the *Bounty* of GOD ought not to be understood, to respect those Things, which are absolutely at the Giver's Pleasure to grant or withhold? Whether, in such Matters, we can be assured, that *Bounty* will give us this or that, which yet we want, is not in *Justice* due, nor secured to us by any Promise? Further it may be enquired how far must *Goodness* extend it self as to *Rewards?* Is it not supposable, that it may stop short of *eternal Felicity*, and think a *less Reward sufficient?* Of so great Weight have these, and the like Difficulties appeared to not a few, and those not of the more stupid Sort of Mankind, that they have not doubted to assert boldly, That even *innocent Man*, without *Revelation* and a positive Promise, could never be assur'd of *eternal Rewards*. And how the *Light of Nature* can disingage us from these Difficulties, were Man perfectly innocent, I do not well understand.

See the Excellency of Theology, &c. by T. H. R. Boil E. P. 25, 26, 27, &c. *and Consid. about the Recon. of Reason and Rel. by* T. E. P. 21. 22.

But,

But whatever there is of this, the *Entrance of Sin* and the Conſideration of Man's Caſe as involv'd in *Guilt*, has caſt us upon new and yet greater Difficulties. From this preſent Condition, wherein we find all Mankind without Exception involv'd, a whole Shoal of Difficulties emerge, never, I am afraid, to be remov'd by *unaſſiſted Reaſon*.

Now, it may be enquir'd, *What Obedience* is it that can entitle us to *eternal Felicity?* If none, ſave that which is *perfect* will ſerve, who ſhall be the better for *this Reward*? Who can pretend to this *perfect* or *ſinleſs Obedience*? If *imperfect Obedience* may, How ſhall we be ſure of this? How ſhall he who deſerves *Puniſhment* claim, demand and expect *Reward*, a *great Reward*, yea, the *greateſt Reward*, *eternal Happineſs*? If the *Goodneſs* of GOD is pleaded, and it is ſaid, That tho' we cannot expect in *ſtrict Juſtice* to have our *imperfect Obedience* rewarded; yet we may hope it from the *Bounty* of GOD; beſide, what was above mov'd againſt this in a more plauſible Caſe, when we were ſpeaking of *innocent Man*, it may be further enquir'd, Whether, tho' *infinite Bounty* might deal thus graciouſly with Man, if he were *prefectly Righteous*, it may not yet withhold its Favours, or at leaſt, ſtop ſhort of *eternal Felicity* with the beſt among Sinners? Again, What *Degree* of *Imperfection* is it that will prejudge this Claim? What may conſiſt with it? Who is Good in that Senſe, which is neceſſary to qualify for this Expectation? Is there any ſuch Perſon exiſtent? What Way ſhall we be ſure of this? Is it to be meaſur'd by *outward Actions* only, or are *inward Principles* and *Aims* to come in Conſideration? Who can know theſe ſave GOD? If it be ſaid, We can know our ſelves to be ſuch: I anſwer, How ſhall we maintain any Confidence of *future*, nay *eternal Rewards*, while Conſcience tells us, we deſerve *Puniſhment*? What if by the *meer Light of Nature* we can never be aſſur'd of *Forgiveneſs*? How ſhall we then by it be ſure of *eternal Rewards*? If we are not rewarded here, how can we know but that it has been for *our Sins* that *good Things have been withheld from us*? May not this be preſum'd the Conſequence of our *known Sins*, or more *covert Evils*, which Self-love has made us overlook? If we ſuffer, yet do we ſuffer more than our Sins deſerve, or even ſo much? If we think ſo, will we be ſuſtain'd Judges competent of the Quality of Offences, and their Demerit which are done againſt GOD, eſpecially when we are the Actors? To whom does it belong to judge? If ye meet with ſome Part, for ye can never prove it is all of the Demerit or deſerved Puniſhment of your Sin here, will this conclude that ye ſhall be exeem'd from *ſuffering* what further GOD may

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in *Justice* think due to them and you on their Account hereafter? What Security have ye that ye shall escape with what is inflicted on you here? And not only so, but instead of meeting with what ye further deserve, obtain *Rewards* which ye dare scarce say ye deserve? If GOD spare at present a *noted Offender*, who cannot without Violence to Reason be suppos'd a Subject meet for *Pardon* or for a *Reward*, and reserve the whole Punishment due to his Crimes, to the other World; but in the mean while, sees meet to inflict *present Punishment* on thee, tho' less criminal, perhaps to convince the World, that even lesser Offenders shall not escape; if, I say, he deal thus, Is there no Way for clearing his *Justice*, but by collating *eternal Happiness* on thee? Why, If he inflict what further Punishment is due to thee, in exact Proportion to thy less atrocious Crimes; and punish the other with *Evils* proportion'd to his more atrocious Crimes, and make him up by the *Severity* of the Stroke for the *Delay* of the *Punishment*; if, I say, thus he do, I challenge any Man to tell me where the *Injustice* lies? And may not the like be said as to any other *vertuous Person*, or whom thou supposes such who meets with *Sufferings*?

Nor do less perplexing Difficulties attend those other Pleas for *future Happiness* to Man, at least, in his present Condition; which are drawn from GOD's *creating* us capable of *future Happiness*, implanting Desires, and giving us Gusts of it: All which would be given in vain, if there was no *Happiness* design'd for Man after Time.

But how by this we can be secur'd of *eternal Happiness*, I do not well see. Nor do I understand how the Difficulties which may be mov'd against *this*, can be resolv'd. It may be enquir'd, Whether *this Desire of Happiness*, said to be implanted in our Natures, is really any Thing distinct from that *natural Tendency* of the Creature, to its own Perfection and Preservation, which belongs to the *Being* of every Creature, with such Difference as to Degrees and the Manner, as their respective Natures require? If it is no more than this, it must be allow'd *essential* to every *rational Creature*: And if every *rational Creature* has an *essential Attribute*, which infers an Obligation on GOD to provide for it *eternal Happiness*, and put it in Possession of *this Felicity*, if no Fault interveen, doth it not thence necessarly follow, That GOD *cannot* possibly, without Injustice, turn to *Nothing* any *innocent rational Creature*; nay, nor create any one, which it's possible for him again to *annihilate* without *Injustice*? For if we should suppose it possible for GOD to do so, and thus without *Injustice* frustrate this Desire, where is the Force of the

the Argument? And it is not a little bold to limit GOD thus? I need not enter into the Debate, Whether there is any ſuppoſable Caſe, wherein *infinite Wiſdom* may think it fit to do ſo? That Diſpute is a little too nice: For on the one Hand, it will be hard for us to determine it poſitively, that *infinite Wiſdom* muſt in any Caſe we can ſuppoſe, think it fit to deſtroy or turn to *Nothing* an *innocent Creature*; and on the other Hand, it is no leſs raſh to aſſert, That our *not knowing* any Caſe, proves that really there is *none ſuch known* to the only wiſe GOD. Beſides, if we allow it only poſſible, in a Conſiſtency with *Juſtice* and *Veracity* for GOD to do it, I am afraid the Argument has loſt its Force. Further, it may be enquir'd, Whether the *rational Creature* can in Duty deſire an *eternal Continuation* in *Being*, otherwiſe than with the *deepeſt Submiſſion* to the *Sovereign Pleaſure* of GOD, where he has given no *poſitive Promiſe*? If *Submiſſion* belongs to it, all Certainty evaniſhes, and we muſt look elſewhere for *Aſſurance* of *eternal Happineſs*. A Deſire of it, if GOD ſee meet to give it, can never prove that certainly he will give it. If it is ſaid, That the Creature without *Submiſſion* or *Fault* may inſiſt upon and claim *eternal Happineſs*; I do not ſee how this can be proven.

But again, Do not *theſe Deſires* reſpect the *whole Man conſiſting of Soul and Body*? Doth not *Death* diſſolve *the Man*? Are not *theſe Deſires* apparently fruſtrate? How will the *Light of Nature* certainly infer from *thoſe Deſires*, *Guſts*, &c. That the whole Man ſhall have *eternal Felicity*, while we ſee the Man daily deſtroy'd by *Death*? Can this be underſtood without *Revelation*? Does the *Light of Nature* teach us that there will be a *Reſurrection*? I grant without the Suppoſal of a *future Exiſtence*, we cannot eaſily underſtand what *End* there was worthy of GOD for making ſuch a *noble Creature* as *Man*: But while we ſee *Man*, on the other Hand, daily deſtroy'd by *Death*, and know nothing of the *Reſurrection of the Body*, which is the Caſe of all thoſe who reject *Revelation*, we ſhall not know what to conclude, but muſt be toſs'd in our own Minds, and be at a Loſs how to reconcile thoſe ſeeming Inconſiſtencies, which gave a *great Man* Occaſion to obſerve, "That "*there can be no Reconciliation of the Doctrine of "future Rewards and Puniſhments, to be righte-"ouſly adminiſtred upon a Suppoſition of the ſepa-"rate, everlaſting Subſiſtence of the Soul only.* And for Proof of this, he inſiſts on ſeveal weighty Conſiderations, which I cannot tranſcribe.

Dr. Owen *on Heb. 6. v. 1, 2. Vol. 3. Pag. 21.*

But

But should we give up all this? will *this Desire of Happiness* prove that GOD design'd it for *Man*, whether he carried himself well or not? If it prove not that *sinful Man* may be *happy*, or that *eternal Happiness* is design'd for *Man*, who is now a *Sinner*, what are we the better for it? Are we not all in more or less guilty? What will it help us, that we were originally design'd for and made capable of *future Felicity*, if we are now under an Incapacity of obtaining it? Do we not find that we have fallen short of *perfect Obedience*? And can *those Desires* assure us that GOD will *pardon*, yea, *reward* us, and that with the *greatest Blessing* which *innocent Man* was capable of? Moreover, before we end this Discourse, I hope to make it appear, That by the *meer Light of Nature* no Man can assuredly know that *Sin shall be pardon'd*; and if so, it's vain to pretend, That we can be assur'd of *eternal Felicity* in our present Condition. They who have sinn'd less and suffer'd more in this Life, shall not be so severly punish'd in that which is to come, as they who have sinn'd more grievously and escap'd without Punishment here, this Reason assures us of: But it can scarce afford us so much as a colourable Plea for *eternal Rewards*, to any *Vertue* stain'd with the *least Sin*. The Scriptures make Mention of a *Happiness* promis'd to *innocent Man* upon *perfect Obedience*; and of *Salvation* to *guilty Man* upon *Faith in JESUS CHRIST*. Beside these Two I know no third Sort. As to the Last, the *Light of Nature* is entirely silent, as we shall see afterwards. Whether it can alone prove the First is a Question: But that *Man* in his present Condition cannot be the better for it, is out of Question.

6. Were it granted that these Arguments are concludent, yet the Matter would be very little mended: For it is certain, That these Arguments are too thin to be discern'd by the dim Eyes of the Generality, even tho' they had Tutors who would be at Pains to Instruct them. Yea, I fear that they rather beget Suspicions than firm Perswasions in the Minds of *Philosophers*. They are of that Sort, which rather silence than satisfie. Arguments *ab Absurdo* rather force the Mind to assent, than determine it chearfully to acquiesce in *the Truth* as discovered. Other Demonstrations carry alongst with them a Discovery of the Nature of the Thing, which satisfies it in some Measure. Hence they have a Force, not only to engage, but to keep the Soul steady in its Adherence to *Truth*; but these oblige to *implicite Belief* as it were, and therefore the Mind easily wavers and loses View of *Truth*; and is no longer firm, than it's forc'd to be so, by a present View of the

the Argument. If learn'd Men were always obſervant of their own Minds, and as ingenuous as the *Auditor* is in *Cicero*, in his Acknowledgment about the Force of *Plato*'s Arguments for the *Immortality of the Soul*, they would make ſome ſuch Acknowledgment as he does. After he has told, That he has read oftner than once *Plato*'s Arguments for the *Immortality of the Soul*, which *Cicero* had recommended in the foregoing Diſcourſe as the beſt that were to be expected, he adds, " *Sed neſcio quomodo, dum lego aſſentior: cum poſui Librum, &* " *mecum ipſe de Immortalitate Animorum cœpi cogitare, Aſſentio omnis illa* " *elabitur.* In like manner might others ſay, When I pore upon thoſe Arguments, I aſſent: But when I begin to look on the Matter, I find there ariſes not ſuch a *Light* from them, as is able to keep the Mind ſteady in its Aſſent. More eſpecially will it be found ſo, if we look not only to the Matter, but to the Difficulties which offer about it. Yet this Steadineſs is of abſolute Neceſſity in this Caſe, ſince a Reſpect to this muſt be ſuppos'd always prevalent, in Order to influence to a ſteady Purſuit. The learn'd Sir *Matt. Hale* obſerves, That, " It is very true, " that partly by an univerſal Tradition, deriv'd probably from the " common Parent of Mankind, partly by ſome Glimmerings of natu- " ral Light in the natural Conſciences, in ſome, at leaſt, of the Hea- " then, there ſeem'd to be ſome common Perſwaſion of a future State " of Rewards and Puniſhments. But firſt it was weak and dim, and " was even in many of the wiſeſt of them overborn; ſo that it was " rather a Suſpicion, or at moſt, a weak and faint Perſwaſion, than a " ſtrong and firm Conviction: And hence it became very unoperative " and ineffectual to the moſt of them, when they had greateſt " need of it; namely, upon imminent or incumbent temporal Evils " of great Preſſure. But, where the Impreſſion was firmeſt among " them, yet ſtill they were in the Dark what it was.

Cicero *Tuſ. Queſt. Lib.* 1.

7 It is further to be conſidered, That it is not the general Perſwaſion that there is a *State of future Happineſs* and *Miſery* which can avail; but there muſt be a Diſcovery of *that Happineſs* in its Nature, or wherein it conſiſts; its Excellency and Suitableneſs to engage Man to look on it as his *chief Good*, purſue it as ſuch, perſevere in the Purſuit over all Oppoſition, and forego other Things, which he ſees and knows the preſent Pleaſure and Advantage of for it. Now ſuch a View the *Light of Nature* can never rationally be pretended able to give: If it is, let the Pretender ſhew us where, and by whom ſuch an Account has been

Herb. *de Ver. P.* 59.

given and verifi'd; or let him do it himself. And if this is not done, as it never has, and I fear not to say, never can be done; it would not mend the Matter, tho' we should forego all that has been above-said, as was above insinuated, which yet we see no Necessity of doing.

8. I might here tell how faintly the *Deists* use to speak upon this Head. Tho' upon Occasion, they can be *positive*; yet at other Times they speak very modestly about the *Being* of a *future State of Happiness*, and tell us, "That Rewards and Punishment hereafter, tho' the No-
" tion of them has not been universally receiv'd,
Orac. of Reas. P. 201. " the Heathens disagreeing about the Doctrine
" of the *Immortality* of the Soul, may yet be
" granted to *seem reasonable*, because they are deduc'd from the Doctrine
" of Providence——, and that they may be granted Parts of *natural*
" *Religion*, because the wisest Men have inclin'd to hold them amongst
" the Heathen, *&c.* and now do in all Opinions. And as they seem not over certain as to the *Being* of *future Rewards* and *Punishments*, so they plainly own they can give no Account what they are, " *Quæ*
" *vero, qualis, quanta* &c. *hæc Vita secunda vel*
De Veri. Pag. 57. " *Mors fuerit ob Defectum Conditionum ad Veri-*
& Alibi sæpius. " *tatis istius Conformationem postulatarum*, sciri
" nequit, Says the learn'd *Herbert*.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Nature's Light affords not a ſufficient Rule of Duty. Its Inſufficiency hence inferr'd.

THere is certainly no other Way of attaining *Happineſs*, than by pleaſing GOD. *Happineſs* is no other Way to be had, than from *him*, and no other Way can we reaſonably expect it from *him*, but in the Way of *Duty* or *Obedience*. *Obedience* muſt either be with Reſpect to theſe Things which immediately regard the Honour of the Deity, or in other Things. The *Inſufficiency of natural Religion as to Worſhip*, has been above demonſtrate. That it is wanting as to the latter, *viz.* theſe Duties which we call'd for Diſtinction's Sake, *Duties of moral Obedience*, is now to be proven. That Man is ſubject to GOD, and ſo in every Thing oblig'd to regulate himſelf according to the Preſcription of GOD, has been above aſſerted, and the Grounds of this Aſſertion have been more than inſinuated. Now if *Nature's Light* is not able to afford a *compleat Directory* as to the Whole of Man's Conduct, in ſo far as the *Deity* is concern'd, it can never be allow'd *ſufficient* to conduct Man in *Religion* and lead him to *eternal Happineſs*: While it leaves him at a Loſs as to *ſufficient Rules* for *univerſal Vertue*, which even *Deiſts* own to be the *principal Way* of ſerving GOD and obtaining *Happineſs*. It is one of the principal Things to which this is to be aſcrib'd, and whereon Man's Hopes muſt reaſonably be ſuppos'd to lean, if he is left to the *meer Conduct* of the *Light of Nature*. Now the *Inſufficiency of Nature's Light* in this Point will be fully made appear, from the enſuing Conſiderations: Some of which are excellently diſcours'd by the *ingenious Mr. Lock* in his *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, as deliver'd in the Scripture*. If he had done as well in other Points as on this, he had deſerv'd the Thanks of all that wiſh well to *Chriſtianity*: But ſo far as he follows

Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, P. 267.

the *Truth*, we shall take his Assistance, and improve some of his Notions, adding such others as are by him omitted, which may be judg'd of Use to the Case in Hand.

1. Then, we observe that no Man left to the Conduct meerly of *Nature's Light*, has offer'd us a *compleat Body of Morality*. Some Parts of our Duty are pretty fully taught by the *Philosophers* and *Politicians*. " So much Vertue as was " necessary to hold Societies together; and to " contribute to the Quiet of Governments; the civil Laws of Com- " mon-wealths taught, and forc'd upon Men that liv'd under Magi- " strates. But these Laws, being for the most Part made by such, who " had no other Aims, but their own Power, reach'd no further than " those Things that would serve to tie Men together in Subjection; " or at most, were directly to conduce to the Prosperity and temporal " Happiness of any People. But *natural Religion* in its full Extent, " was no where, that I know, taken Care of by the Force of *natural* " *Reason*. It should seem by the Little that hitherto has been done " in it, that it is too hard a Thing for *unassisted Reason*, to establish " *Morality* in all its Parts upon its true *Foundations*, with a clear and " convincing Light. Some Parts have been noticed, and others quite omitted. A *compleat System of Morality* in its whole Extent has never been attempted by the *meer Light of Nature*, much less compleated.

Ibid. Pag. 268.

2. To gather together the scattered Rules that are to be met with in the Writings of *Morality*, and weave these Shreads into a competent *Body of Morality*, in so far as even the particular Direction of any one Man would require, is a Work of that immense Labour, and requires so much Learning, Study and Attention, that it has never been perform'd, and never like to be perform'd, and quite surmounts the Capacity of *most*, if not of *any one Man*. So that neither is there a *compleat Body of Morality* given us by any one. Nor is it ever like to be collected from those who have give us Parcels of it.

3. Were all the moral Directions of the *ancient Sages* collected, it would not be a *System* that would be any Way useful to the Body of Mankind. It would consist for most Part of enigmatical, dark and involv'd Sentences, that would need a Commentary too long for vulgar Leasure to peruse, to make them intelligible. Any one that is in the least Measure acquaint with the *Writings* of the *Philosophers* will not question this. Of what Use would it be to read *such Morality* as that of *Pythagoras*, whose fam'd Sentences were, *Poak not in the Fire*

Powe Rake dig - with

with a Sword; Stride not over the Beam of a Ballance; Sit not upon a Buſhel; Eat not the Heart; Take up your Burthen with Help; Eaſe your ſelf of it with Aſſiſtance; Have always your Bed-clothes well tuck'd up; Carry not the Image of GOD about you in a Ring, &c. Was this like to be of any Uſe to Mankind? No ſure, ſome of them indeed ſpeaks more plain, ſome of them leſs ſo; but none of them ſufficiently plain to be underſtood by the Vulgar. Diog. Laert. *Life of* Pythagoras.

4. Further, were this Collection made, and, upon other Accounts, unexceptionable; yet it would not be ſufficiently full to be an *univerſal Directory.* For, 1. Many important Duties would be wanting. *Self-denial,* that conſiſts in a mean Opinion of our ſelves, and leads to a ſubmitting, and paſſing from all our moſt valuable Concerns, when the Honour of GOD requires it, *is the fundamental Duty of all Religion,* that which is of abſolute Neceſſity to a due Acknowledgment of Man's Subjection and Dependence; and yet we ſhall find a deep Silence in all the *Moraliſts* about it. Which Defect is the more conſiderable, that *the Whole of our Apoſtacy* is eaſily reducible to this one Point, *An Endeavour to ſubject the Will, Concerns and Pleaſures of GOD to our own.* And no Act of *Obedience* to him, can, without groſs Ignorance of his Nature, and Unacquaintedneſs with the Extent of his Knowledge, be preſum'd acceptable, which flows not from ſuch a Principle of *Self-denial,* as fixedly prefer the *Concerns* of GOD's Glory to all other Things. Again, what Duty have we more need of, than that which is employ'd in *forgiving Enemies,* nay in *loving* them? We have frequent Occaſions for it. If we are not acquaint that this is Duty, we muſt frequently run into the oppoſite Sin. But where is this taught among the *Heathens?* Further, where ſhall we find a *Directory* as to the *inward Frame* and *Actings* of our Minds, guiding us how to regulate our Thoughts, our Deſigns? Some Notice is taken of the *outward Behaviour*; but little of that which is *the Spring* of it. Where is there a *Rule* for the Direction of our Thoughts, as to *Objects,* about which they ſhould be employ'd, or as to the *Manner,* wherein they are to be converſant about them? Theſe Things are of great Importance, and yet by very far out of the Ken of *uninlightned Nature.* Divine and ſpiritual Things were little known, and leſs thought of by *Philoſophers.* 2. As this Syſteme would be *defective* as to particular Duties of the higheſt Importance; ſo it would be quite *defective* as to the Grounds of thoſe Duties which are enjoin'd. It is not enough to recommend Duty, that

that it is useful to us, or the Societies we live in. When we act only on such Grounds, we shew some Regard to our selves and the Societies whereof we are Members; but none to GOD. Where are these clear'd to be the *Laws* of GOD? Who is he that presses *Obedience* upon the Consciences of Men, from the Consideration of *GOD's Authority* stampt upon these *Laws* he prescribes? And yet without this, you may call it what you will: *Obedience* you cannot call it.

Reasonableness of Christianity, P. 278. It is well observed by Mr. *Lock*, "Those just "Measures of *Right* and *Wrong*, which Necessity "had any where introduc'd, the *Civil Laws* "prescrib'd or *Philosophers* recommended, stood not on their true "Foundations. They were look'd on as Bonds of Society, and Conveniencies of common Life, and laudable Practices: But where was "it that their Obligation was throughly known, and allow'd, and "they receiv'd as Precepts of a *Law*, of the *highest Law*, the *Law of* "*Nature?* That could not be without the clear Knowledge of the "*Law-giver*, and the *great Rewards* or *Punishments* for those that would "not, or would obey. *But the Religion of the Heathens, as was before* "*observ'd, little concern'd it self in their Morals. The Priests that* "*delivered the Oracles of Heaven and pretended to speak from the Gods,* "*spoke little of Vertue and a good Life. And on the other Side, the* "Philosophers, *who spoke from Reason, made not much Mention of the* "*Deity in their Ethicks.*

5. Not only would *this Rule* be *defective* and *lame*; but it would be found *corrupt* and *pernicious*. For 1. Instead of leading them in the *Way*, it would in many Instances, lead them *aside*.

Epict. *Enchirid.* Cap. 38. We should have here *Epictetus* binding you to *temporize* and *worship the Gods after the Fashion of your Country*. You should find *Pythagoras forbidding you to pray for your self to GOD*, because ye know not what is convenient.

Diog. Laert. *Vit.* Pyth. P. 7. You should find *Aristotle* and *Cicero* commending *Revenge* as a *Duty*. The latter you should find defending *Brutus* and *Cassius* for *killing Cesar*, and thereby authorizing the Murder of any *Magistrates*, if the Actors can but perswade themselves that they are *Tyrants*. Had we nothing to conduct us in our Obedience and Loyalty, but the Sentiments of *Philosophers*, no Prince could be secure either of his Life or Dignity. You should find *Cicero* pleading for *Self-murder*, from which he can never be freed, nor can any tolerable Apology be made for him. Herein he was seconded

ſeconded by *Brutus, Cato, Caſſius, Seneca* and others innumerable. Many of them practis'd it, others applauded of their Sentiments in this Matter. You may find a large Account in Mr. *Dodwel's Apology for the Philoſophical Performances of Cicero* prefix'd to Mr. *Parker's* Traſlation of his Book *de Finibus.* And you may find the *Deiſts* juſtifying this in the Preface to the *Oracles of Reaſon,* wherein *Blount's* killing of himſelf is juſtify'd. Of the ſame Mind was *Seneca,* who expreſly adviſes the Practice of it. We ſhould here find *cuſtomary Swearing commended,* if not by *their Precepts,* yet by *the Examples* of the *beſt Moraliſts, Plato, Socrates* and *Seneca.* In whom numerous Inſtances of Oaths by *Jupiter, Hercules* and by *Beaſts* do occur. In the the ſame Way we ſhould find *unnatural Luſt recommended. Ariſtotle* practis'd it. And *Socrates* is fully bely'd, if he lov'd not the ſame Vice. Whence elſe could *Socratici Cinædi* come to be a Proverb in *Juvenal's* Days, *Pride* and *Self-eſteem* were among their *Vertues.* Which gives me Occaſion to obſerve, That this one Thing overturn'd their *whole Morality. Epictetus,* one of the beſt of all their *Moraliſts,* tells us, " That " the Conſtitution and Image of a *Philoſopher* is " to expect Good, as well as fear Evil only from himſelf. *Seneca* urgeth this every where, " *Sapiens tam æquo Animo* " *omnia apud alios videt, contemnitque, quam* " Jupiter: *Et hoc ſe magis ſuſpicit, quod* Jupiter " *uti illis non poteſt, ſapiens non vult.* And again, " *Eſt aliquid quo Sapiens antecedat Deum. Ille* " *Naturæ Beneficio, non ſuo, Sapiens eſt. Incomptus* " *Vir ſit externis & inſuperabilis, Miratorque tantum ſui.* Pride and " Self-eſteem was a Diſeaſe epidemical amongſt them, and ſeems " wholly incurable by any Notions they had. Some arriv'd to that " Impudence to compare themſelves with, nay, prefer themſelves be- " fore their own Gods. It was either a horrible Folly to *deifie* what " they poſtpon'd to their own Self-eſtimation, or " elſe it was a ſtupendious Effect of their Pride " to prefer themſelves to the Gods they wor- " ſhipped. Never any Man amongſt them " propoſed the Honour of their Gods as the *chief* " *End* of their Actions, nor ſo much as dream'd

Seneca de Ira, Lib. 3. Cap. 15.

Diog. Laert. Vita *Ariſt.* Lib. 5. P. 323.

Epict. Ench. Cap. 27.

Seneca. Epiſt. 73.

Epiſt. 53.

Id. de vita Beata, Cap. 8.

Sir Ch. Wolſeley *Reaſonableneſs of Scripture Belief,* P. 118.

" of

" of any such Thing; 'is evident the best of them in their best Actions " reflected still back to themselves, and determinated there, designing " to set up a Pillar to their own Fame. That known Sentence of *Cicero*, who speaks plain out what others thought, will justifie this severe Censure given by this worthy Person; *Vult plane Virtus Honorem: Nec Virtutis ulla alia Merces.* Were it needful, I might write Volumes to this Purpose, that would make one's Flesh tremble to read. They who desire Satisfaction in this Point, may find it largely done by others. I shall conclude *this first Evidence* of the *Corruption* of their *Morality* with this general Reflection of the *learn'd Amyrald* in his *Treatise of Religions*; " Scarce can " there be found any Common-wealth amongst " those, which have been esteem'd the best go- " vern'd, in which some grand and signal Vice " has not been excus'd, or permitted, or even sometimes recommended by publick Laws.

Cicero *de Amicitia.*

See Instances to this Purpose in a Discourse of moral Vertue, *and its Difference from Grace*, P. 225.

2. Not only did they injoin *wrong Things*; but they injoin'd what was *right* to a *wrong End*, yea even their best Things, as we heard but now, aim'd at their own Honour. We have heard *Cicero* to this Purpose telling plainly *that Honour was their Aim.* Or what the Poet said of *Brutus* killing his own Sons when they intended the overthrow of the Liberty of their Country,

Vicit Amor Patriæ Laudumque immensa Cupido,

is the most that can be pleaded for most of them. Others are plainly blasphemous as we have heard from *Seneca*, designing to be *above GOD* by his *Vertue.* At this Rate this *Philosopher* talks very oft: *Let Philosophy*, says he, *minister this to me, that it render me equal to GOD.* To the Maintenance of this, their Notions about the Soul of Man contributed much; stiling it a Piece clipt from GOD Ἀπόσπασμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, or a Part of GOD τοῦ Διὸς Μόριον, as *Epictetus* speaks. *Horace* calls it *Divinæ Particula Auræ.* *Cicero* in his *Somnium Scip.* tells us what they thought of themselves, *Deum scito te esse, know thy self to be a God.* And accordingly the *Indian Brachmans* vouch'd themselves for Gods. And indeed they, who debas'd their Gods below Men, by their abominable Characters of them, it was no Wonder to find them prefer themselves to them. Nor did any run higher this Way than *Plato.*

Seneca, Epist. 48.

Let

Let any one read his Arguments for the *Immortality of the Soul*, and if they prove any Thing, they prove it *a God*. Thus they quite corrupted all they taught, by directing it to wrong Ends. 3. *This Syſteme* would corrupt us as to the *Fountain of Vertue* and its *Principle*, teaching us to truſt our ſelves, and not depend on GOD for it. We have heard ſome ſpeak to this Purpoſe already; and *Cicero* may well be allow'd to ſpeak for the reſt. "*A Deo tantum Rationem habemus: Bonam autem Rationem, aut non bonam a nobis.* And a little after, near the cloſe of his Book, after he has own'd our external Advantages of Learning to GOD, he ſubjoins, "*Virtutem autem Nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit, nimirum recte: Propter Virtutem enim Jure laudamur, & in Virtute recte gloriamur, quod non contingeret, ſi id Donum a Deo, non a nobis haberemus.* Thus we ſee how corrupt they were in this Point, and it is here eaſily obſervable whence they were corrupted as to their *chief End*. He that believes he has any Thing that is not from GOD, will have ſomewhat alſo that he will not refer to him, as his *chief End*. 4. The *Corruption* of *this Syſteme*, would in this appear, that it would be *full of Contradictions*. Here we ſhall find nothing but endleſs Jarrs; one condemning as abominable, what another approves and praiſes: Whereby we ſhould be led very often to judge neither right, rather than any of them. A Man, who for Direction, will betake himſelf to the Declarations of the *Philoſophers*, goes into a wild Wood of Uncertainty, and to an endleſs Maze, from which he ſhould never get out. Plenty of Inſtances, confirming theſe two laſt mentioned Obſervations, might be adduc'd. If the Reader deſire them, I ſhall refer him to Mr. *Lock's Eſſay of Humane Underſtanding*, Book 1. Chap. 3. Parag. 9. where he may ſee it has been cuſtomary with Nations not a few to expoſe their Children, bury them alive without Scruple, fatten them for the Slaughter, kill them and eat them, and diſpatch their aged Parents: Yea ſome, he will find, have been ſo abſurd, as to *expect Paradiſe* as a *Reward of Revenge*, and of *eating Abundance of their Enemies*. Whether theſe Inſtances will anſwer Mr. *Lock*'s Purpoſe, I diſpute not now. I deſign not to make my ſelf a Party in that Controverſy. But I am ſure ſuch *fatal Miſtakes*, as to what is *Good* and *Evil*, are a pregnant Evidence of the *Inſufficiency of Nature's Light* to afford us a *compleat Rule* of Duty. If they, who were left to it, blundered ſo ſhamefully in the cleareſt Caſes, how ſhall we expect Direction, as to theſe that are far more intricate?

Cicero *de Natura Deorum*, Lib. 3. P. *mihi*, 173.

6. Be *this Syſteme* never ſo compleat, yet it can never be allow'd to be a *Rule of Life* to Mankind. This I cannot better ſatisfie my ſelf upon, than by tranſcribing what the ingenious Mr. *Lock* has excellently diſcours'd on this Head. " I will ſuppoſe there was a *Stobeus* in thoſe " Times, who had gathered the *moral Sayings* from all the *Sages* of " the World. What would this amount to, towards being a *ſteady Rule*, " a *certain Tranſcript* of a *Law*, that we are under? Did the Saying " of *Ariſtippus*, or *Confutius*, give it Authority? Was *Zeno* a Law-" giver to Mankind? If not, what he or any other *Philoſopher* de-" livered, was but a Saying of his. Mankind might hearken to it or " reject it as they pleaſ'd, or as it ſuited their Intereſt, Paſſions, " Principles or Humours. They were under no Obligation: The " Opinion of this or that *Philoſopher*, was of no Authority. And if it " were, you muſt take all he ſaid, under the ſame Character. All his " Dictates muſt go for Law, certain and true; or none of them. And " then, if you will take the moral Sayings of *Epicurus* (many whereof " *Seneca* quotes with Approbation) for Precepts of the Law of Na-" ture, you muſt take all the reſt of his Doctrine for ſuch too, or " elſe his Authority ceaſes: So no more is to be received from him, " or any of the *Sages* of old, for Parts of the Law of Nature, as carrying " with them an Obligation to be obey'd, but what they prove to be " ſo. But ſuch a Body of *Ethicks*, prov'd to be the Law of Nature, " from Principles or Reaſon, and reaching all the Duties of Life; I " think no Body will ſay the World had before our Saviour's Time. " *And I may add, nor to this Day has by the meer Light of Nature.* 'Tis " not enough, continues he, that there were up and down ſcattered " Sayings of wiſe Men, conformable to right Reaſon. The Law " of Nature was the Law of Conveniency too: And it is no Wonder " theſe Men of Parts, and ſtudious of Vertue, (who had Occaſion to " think of any particular Part of it) ſhould, by Mediation, light on " the Right, even from the obſervable Conveniency and Beauty of it, " without making out its Obligation from the true Principles of the " Law of Nature, and Foundations of Morality. More he adds judiciouſly to this Purpoſe; but this is enough. And hence it is plain, That ſuch *a Syſteme of Morality* would, if collected, at beſt be only a Col-lection of Problems, which every Man is left at Liberty to canvaſs, diſpute, or reject; nay more, which every Man is oblig'd to examine as to all its Parts, in ſo far as it preſcribes Rules to him, and not to receive, but upon a Diſcovery of its Truth from its proper Principles.

7. It

7. It is then plain that every Man is left to his *own Reaſon* to find out *his* Duty by. He is not to receive it upon any other *Authority*, than that of *Reaſon*, if *Revelation* is rejected. He muſt find out therefore, in every Caſe, what he is to do, and deduce its Obligation from the *Principles* of the *Law of Nature*. But who ſees not, that the moſt Part of Men have neither Leiſure nor Capacity for ſuch a Work? Men may think Duty eaſy to be diſcovered now, when *Chriſtianity* has clear'd it up. But Mr. *Lock* well obſerves, "That the firſt Knowledge "of thoſe Truths, which have been diſcovered by *Chriſtian Philoſophers*, "or *Philoſophers* ſince *Chriſtianity* prevails, are owing to Revelation; "tho' aſſoon as they are heard and conſider'd, they are found to be "agreeable to Reaſon; and ſuch as can by no Means be contradicted. "Every one may obſerve a great many Truths which he receives, at "firſt, from others, and readily aſſents to, as conſonant to Reaſon, "which he would have found it hard, and perhaps beyond his Strength "to have diſcovered himſelf. Native and original Truth, is not ſo "eaſily wrought out of the *Mine*, as we who have it delivered, ready "dug and faſhion'd into our Hands, are apt to imagine. And how "often at Fifty and Threeſcore Years old are thinking Men told, "what they wonder how they could miſs thinking of? which yet "their own Contemplations did not, and poſſibly, never would have "helped them to. Experience ſhews that the Knowledge of Morality, "by meer natural Light (how agreeable ſoever it be to it) makes "but a ſlow Progreſs and little Advance in the World: Whatever "was the Cauſe, 'tis plain in Fact that humane Reaſon, unaſſiſted, "fail'd Men in its great and proper Buſineſs of Morality.

8. As it is unqueſtionably certain, That the moſt Part of Mankind are not able, by their own Reaſon to frame a *compleat Body of Morality* for themſelves, or find out what is their own Duty, in every particular Inſtance (I ſhall not ſpeak of any Man's being oblig'd to diſcover what belongs to other Peoples Duty, leſt our Antagoniſts ſhould ſuſpect I deſign'd to open a Door for *Prieſts*, a Sett of Men and an Office which they mortally hate) I ſpeak only of what is every one's Duty in particular. And I ſay it is evident the moſt Part of Mankind are *unable* to find this, which is not to be done, but by ſuch Strains of Reaſoning and Connexion of Conſequences, which they have neither Leiſure to weigh, nor, for Want of Capacity, Education and Uſe, Skill to judge of; and as I ſay, they are unable for this; ſo I fear this Taſk will be found too hard for the *ableſt Philoſophers*. Particular

Duties are so many, and many of them so remote from the *first Principles*, and the Connexion is so subtile and fine spun, that I fear, not to say it must, escape the piercing Eyes of the most *acute Philosophers*: And if they engage in Pursuit of the Discovery, through so many and so subtile Consequences, they must either quit the unequal Chace, or lose themselves instead of finding *Truth* and *Duty*. And if we allow our selves to judge of what shall be, by what has been the Success of such Attempts, I am sure this is more than bare Guess.

9. It is further to be observed that no tolerable Progress could be made herein, were it to be done, before advanc'd Years. But its certain that Youth as well as riper Age is under the *Law of Nature*, and that Age needs clear Discoveries of *Duty* the more, that in it irregular Passions and Inclinations are more vigorous, and it is expos'd to mo Temptations than any other Part of a Man's Life; and besides, wants the Advantages of *Experience*, to fortifie it against the dangerous Influence of them, which advanced Years are attended with. Now it will be to no Purpose to me to find out some Years hence, what was my Duty before, as to *Obedience*; for now the Season is over. The *Law* may discover *my Sin*, but can never regulate *my Practice*, in a Period of my Life that is past and gone. Every Man must have the Knowledge of each Day's Duty in its Season. This is not to be had from the *Light of Nature*. If we are left at a Loss in our younger Years, as *Nature's Light* will have us, we may be ruin'd before Knowledge come. Much Sin must be contracted. Ill Habits are like to be very much strength'ned, before any Stop come: Yea, they may be so strong, that the Foundation of inevitable Ruin may be laid.

Finally, *Knowledge* is requisite before acting, at least, in Order of Nature it is so; and must, at least, in Order of Time be Contemporary. Action gives not always Time for long reasoning and weighing such Trains of Consequences, as are requisite to clear Duties from the *first Principles* of *Nature's Light*, and enforce their Obligation. And therefore Man left to it, is in a miserable Plight, not much unlike to the Case of the *Romans*, *Dum deliberant* Romani *capitur Saguntum*: *While he is searching for Duty, the Season is lost*; and the Discovery, if it comes, arrives too late to be of any Use.

It is in vain for any to pretend, That the *Knowledge of Duty is connate to the Mind of Man*. Whatever may be pretended as to a few of the *first Principles of Morality*, and its but a very few of which this can be alledg'd, yet it is certain, it can never be without Impudence extended

extended to the thouſand Part of *the Duties* we are bound to in particular Caſes. General Rules may be eaſy; particular ones are the Difficulty, and the Application of Generals to circumſtantiate Caſes, is a hard Task. It is but with an ill Grace pretended, that *theſe Duties* are *Self-evident*, and the Knowledge of them *innate* or *connate*, call it what you pleaſe, to the Mind of Man; which the World has never been agreed about; which wiſe Men, when the faireſt Occaſions offer'd of thinking on them, could not diſcern, which *Philoſophers*, upon Application and Attention, cannot make out from the *Principles of Reaſon*. The Reaſon why *the Knowledge* of *any Truth* is ſaid to be *Innate*, is, becauſe, either the Mind of Man is ſtruck with the Evidence in its firſt Propoſal, and muſt yield Aſſent, without ſeeking Help from any Principles of a clearer Evidence; or, becauſe its Dependence on *ſuch Principles* is ſo obvious, that the Concluſion is ſo plainly connected with ſuch Principles, that its never ſooner ſpoke of, than its Connexion with them, and ſo its Truth, appears. Of the *firſt Sort* few Duties can be ſaid to be. And if they were of the *laſt Sort*, any Perſon of a tolerable Capacity would be able to demonſtrate them upon Attention. Now how far it is otherwiſe in this Caſe, who ſees not?

Upon the Whole I muſt conclude, That *Nature's Light is not ſufficient* to give us *ſuch a Law* or *Rule* as may be *a ſure Guide* of thoſe who deſire to go right, ſo that they need not loſe their Way, or miſtake their Duty, if they have a Mind to know it, nor be uncertain whether they have done it.

It will not relieve the *Deiſts* to pretend, That ſome of the Exceptions above-mention'd, may be retorted upon *Chriſtians*, and improven againſt the *Scriptures*: For Nothing but *Ignorance* of the true State of the Queſtion can give Countenance to this Pretence. The *Scriptures* are a *Rule* provided by *Sovereign Grace* for *fallen Man*, and by *Infinite Wiſdom* are adjuſted to GOD's *great Deſign of recovering Man* to the Praiſe of his *own Grace*, in ſuch a Way as may *ſtain the Pride of all Glory*. They are *ſufficient* as an *outward Mean*, and do effectually conduct Man to *that Happineſs* deſign'd for him, under the Influence of the *aſſiſting Grace* provided for him, and in the Uſe of the Means of GOD's Appointment. They provide *a Relief* againſt any *unavoidable Defects* in *his Obedience*, and direct to the *proper Grounds* of *his Acceptance* in it: But Men, who pretend *Nature's Light* is able to guide to *Happineſs*, are oblig'd to inſtruct that it affords us *a Rule of Duty*; which of it ſelf, without the Help of any *ſupernatural Aſſiſtance*, either as to *outward*

Means

Means or *inward Influences*, may be able to lead Man to the *Obedience* requir'd; and *this Obedience* must be such, as answers our *original Obligation*, and upon Account of its *own Worth*, is able to support, not only a *Hope of Acceptance*, but of *future*, nay *eternal Rewards*. For such as are left to *Nature's Light*, can neither pretend to any such *outward Means*, nor *inward Assistance*, nor any such *Relief* against Defects in *Knowledge* or *Practice*, as *the Scriptures* do furnish us with. *Nature's Light* lays no other Foundation for *Hopes of Acceptance* or *Reward* save only the *Worth* or *Perfection* of the *Obedience it self*. And this, if it is duly considered, not only repels the pretended Retortion, but gives additional Force to the foregoing Argument.

CHAP. VIII.

Proving the Insufficiency of natural Religion from its Defects as to sufficient Motives for enforcing Obedience.

IT is warmly disputed in the Schools, Whether *Rewards* and *Punishments* be not so much of the *Essence* of a Law, and so included in its Notion, that Nothing can properly be stil'd Law which wants them? I design not to make my self a Party in those Disputes. But this much is certain, That *Laws* and *Government* are *Relatives*; they mutually infer and remove each other. There is *no Government* properly so call'd, that wants *Laws*, or somewhat that is the Measure and Standard of its Administration. And there are *no Laws* where there is no *Authority* and *Government* to enjoin them. Whence this plainly results, That *Obedience*, if it does no more, yet it certainly intitles to the *Protection* of the *Government*. And *Disobedience*, not only denudes of any Title to that, but lays open to such further Severities, as the *Government* shall have Power to execute and see meet to use for its own Preservation, against Violators of its Constitutions. But further, to wave this Dispute quite, the Nature of Man which proceeds not to Action save upon Knowledge, makes this much certain, That whatever he may be suppos'd oblig'd to in strict Duty, yet really in Fact, he

uses

not uses to pay any great Regard to *Laws* which are not enforc'd by *Motives* or *Inducements*, that may be suppos'd to work with him, as containing *Discoveries* of *such Advantages* attending *Obedience*, and *Disadvantages* following *Disobedience*, as may powerfully sway him to consult his *Duty* as well as *Interest*, by yielding Obedience. If then *natural Religion* is found unable to discover those Things which ordinarly prevail with Man to obey, and carry him over any Obstructions which lie in the Way, it can never be suppos'd *sufficient* to lead Man to *Happiness*: For Man is not to be driven but led; he is not to be led blind-folded, but upon rational Views of *Duty* and *Interest*. That *natural Religion* is in this Respect *exceedingly Defective*, is the Design of this Discourse to demonstrate. All those Motives, which usually have any Influences, may, I think, be brought under the following Heads. 1. *A full View of the Authority of the Lawgiver and his Laws.* And 2. *A Prospect of present Benefit by Obedience.* 3. *A Prospect of future Rewards for it.* 4. *Fear of Punishment in Case of Disobedience.* And 5. *Examples.* Now, as I know no Motive which may not easily without Stretch be resolved into one of those, so, if I make it appear that *Nature's Light* is lame as to each of them, I think I have gone a great Way to disprove its *Sufficiency* to *Happiness*. Well, let us essay it.

1. The great Inducement to *Obedience* is *a clear Discovery of the Authority of the Lawgiver, and Laws* thence resulting. This is not perhaps, properly speaking, a *Motive*, as it is oft used: For in very Deed this is the *formal Reason* of *Obedience*: A Regard whereto gives any Action the Denomination of *Obedience*, and entitles to the *Law's Protection*, and other Advantages; yet certain it is, that this should have the principal Influence, from the Ground just now laid down, and therefore we shall here speak of it. It will prevail far with Man to obey the *Law of Nature*, if *Nature's Light* clearly discover how much the *Lawgiver* deserves that Place; how well he is qualify'd for it; how indisputable his Title to the Government is; and how far he has interposed his Authority, that the Stamp of it is on *these Laws*, to which we are urg'd to be subject, that they bear a plain Congruity to his sublime Qualifications, that he is concern'd to have them obey'd, observes the Intertainment they meet with, entertains a Respect for *the Obedient*, and resents *Disobedience*. If we are left in the Dark, as to all or most of these, it will exceedingly weaken our Regard to *the Law*. And that this is plainly the Case, is now to be made appear. 1. It goes a great Way toward the *Recommendation* of *any Law* to be fully satisfy'd.

tisfy'd as to the Qualifications of the Framer. But how dark is *Nature's Light* here? It discovers indeed his *Power* and *Greatness*: But its Notions of his *Wisdom*, *Justice*, *Clemency* and *Goodness* are exceedingly darkned, by the seemingly unequal Distributions of Things here below, the innumerable Miseries, under which the World groans, and other Things of a like Nature; that truly very few, if left meerly to its Conduct, would reach any such Discoveries of those glorious Properties, as would influence any considerable Regard to those Laws he is suppos'd to make.

I dispute not now what may be strictly known and demonstrate of GOD, by a Train of subtile Arguments. For I would not be understood so much as to insinuate the Want of *objective Evidences* of the *Wisdom* and *Goodness of the Deity*. Our Question respects not so much these, as *Man's Power* of discerning them. It is not absolutely deny'd, that there are many and pregnant Evidences of *these Attributes* in the Works of *Creation* and *Providence*; our Question is only, Whether there is such Evidence of those Perfections, especially in GOD's *moral Government* of the World, every where appearing, as may be able effectually to influence the Practice, and affect the Mind of Man in his present State, notwithstanding of any Obstructions arising, either from the *inward Weakness* of his *Faculties*, or the *Works of GOD* from without, which to the darkned Mind of Man may have a contrary Appearance? And that which I contend is, That such is the State of Things, so they go in the World, and so blind are Mens Eyes, that there is not so near and clear Evidence of these Things, in what is discernible by the most of Men, as may strike strongly, affect powerfully, and have a lively Influence to quicken to practise. If our Governour is near, if he is daily conversant with us, if we have daily indisputed Evidences of his *Goodness*, *Wisdom*, *Justice*, *Clemency*, and other Qualifications fitting for Government, without *any Actions* that may seem to be capable of a *contrary Construction*, or even of a *dubious* one, this inforces a Regard to his Commands. On the contrary, if he is little known, if his Way of Management is hid from us, if there are Instances, which however possibly they may be just, yet have a contrary Appearance to us, this weakens Regard and confounds quite. And this is plainly the Case as to GOD with Men left to the *meer Conduct of Nature's Light*, not through any Defect on GOD's Part, but through the Darkness of the Mind of Man in his present State; and this is the more considerable, that we use to be more sensible of what Evil any is suppos'd

pos'd to do us, than of what *Good* we receive from them. Now ſince this Obſervation is of Uſe to prevent Miſtakes, I deſire it may be carry'd along through the reſt of *our Remarks*. 2. It works powerfully, and ſtrongly excites to Obedience, if the Indiſputableneſs of the *Lawgiver*'s Title, and the Grounds whereon it leans are clearly known. Now as to GOD, the Grounds of his Title to the *Legiſlative* as well as *Executive Power*, are the *ſupereminent Excellency of his Nature*, rendring him not only fit, but the *only* fit Perſon for it; *his Creation of all Things*, and thence reſulting, *Propriety in them* as his Creatures, ſuch as his *Preſervation* of them in *Being*, his *Providential Care* and *Inſpection*, and the *many Benefits* he beſtows on them. But we have heard already, how dim the Diſcoveries of GOD's *ſupereminent Excellencies* are, which the *Light of Nature* affords. As to his *Creation*, it was diſputed among the *Learn*'d and quite overlook'd by the *Vulgar*, amongſt thoſe who were left to *Nature's Light*, as Baron *Herbert* well obſerves and clears. As to his *cloſe Influence* in their *Preſervation*, it could not be noticed or known, where the other was overlook'd. His *providential Care* and *Inſpection*, which perhaps, as to its *Power of Influencing*, would go the greateſt Length, if it can be proven by the *Light of Nature*; yet cannot certainly by it be explain'd, and truly is ſo darkned by many obvious Occurrencies in the external Adminiſtration of the World, that paſt all peradventure, it can never ſuitably affect Men, who have no other Diſcoveries of it, than the *Light of Nature* affords. As to GOD's *Benefits*, tho' they are many, yet they did not affect ſo much, becauſe they were convey'd by the Intervention of ſuch ſecond Cauſes as did arreſt, inſtead of helping forward the ſhort ſighted Minds of Men, and detain'd them in Contemplation of the Servant who brought the Favour, whereas they ſhould have look'd further, to him who ſent it; ſo they ſhould have done, but ſo they did not. Again, ſome of their moſt *valuable Benefits*, their *Vertues*, they deny'd GOD to be the Author of, as we have heard above from *Seneca*, *Cicero* and *Epictetus*. And finally, ſome of them were inclinable to think, That the *Benefits* were more than countervail'd by the *Evils* we labour under. Thus were the Minds of Men darkned, and ſo they had continued, if we had been without *Revelation*. 3. It is of much Force to influence *Obedience*, if we have a clear and ſatisfying Diſcovery of his Concernment in thoſe *Laws*; that is, that he who is thus qualify'd for, and rightfully poſſeſs'd of the Government, has made ſuch Laws, and ſtamp'd his Authority on them. However great *Ideas* we have of his *Excellency* and *Title* to give *Laws*; yet this will

have no Weight, if we are not clearly satisfy'd that these are *his Laws*. Now how palpably defective *Nature's Light* is here, has been fully made out in the *last Chapter*. 4. It will have no small Force, if we had a clear Knowledge, That *these Laws* are in their Matter fully congruous to the Qualifications we desire in a Lawgiver, such as *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, *Justice*, *Clemency*, and the like. But as these Attributes are either not known or darkly known by the *Light of Nature*; so the Impress of them on the *Laws of Nature* has not been discovered, nor is it discoverable: For I doubt not but it might easily be made appear, That the whole Frame of the *Laws of Nature* are adapted to the Nature of Man as *Innocent*, and indued with sufficient Power to continue so, which is not the Case with him now. And therefore how to reconcile *these Laws* to the Notions of GOD and Man is a Speculation, as of the last Consequence, so of the greatest Difficulty, which had never been got through, if GOD had not vouchsaf'd us *another Guide* than *Nature's Light*. 5. If the *Lawgiver* is certainly known to have a great Regard to his *Laws*, and to take careful Inspection of the Observation of them; this will be strong Inducement to regard them. But here *Nature's Light* is no less dark, than as to the rest. The whole Face of Things in the World seem to have so contrary an Aspect, that we could never see clearly through this Matter, if without *Revelation* we were left to judge of GOD by the *meer Light of Nature*. The abounding of Sin, Prosperity of Sinners, Sufferings of the Best and the like, led some to deny quite GOD's *Providence* and *Government*; others of the better Sort doubted of it, as *Claudian* elegantly represents his own Case, *Lib.* 1. *contra* Rufinum;

Sæpe mihi dubiam traxit Sententia Mentem,
Curarent Superi Terras, an nullus ineſſet
Rector, & incerto fluerent mortalia Caſu.
Nam cum diſpoſiti quæſiſſem Fœdera Mundi,
Præſcriptoſque Mari Fines, Annique Meatus,
Et Lucis, Noctiſque Vices: Tunc omnia rebar
Conſilio firmata Dei———
Sed cum Res Hominum tanta Caligine volvi
Adſpicerem, latoſque diu florere Nocentes,
Vexarique Pios: Rurſus labefacta cadebat
Religio Cauſſæque Viam non ſponte ſequebar,
Alterius, vacuo quæ currere Semina Motu

Affirma-

Affirmat magnumque novas per inane Figuras
Fortuna, non Arte, Regi: Quæ Numina Senſu
Ambiguo vel nulla putat, vel neſcia noſtri.

I know that *Claudian* got over this by *Rufinus* his Death, but ſuch Providences have not always the like Iſſue, and I only adduce his Words as a lively Repreſentation of the Strait. Yea, to ſo great a Height came theſe Doubts, that it's to be fear'd many were carry'd to the worſt Side. 'Tis certain the beſt of them were ſo confounded with thoſe Occurrencies, that they could not ſpare Reflections full of Blaſphemy upon *Providence*. The fam'd *Cato*'s laſt Words may ſcarce be excus'd from this Crime. Finally, it's certain, That there was ſo much Darkneſs about this Matter, that none of them all pay'd a due Regard to GOD.

I ſhall now leave *this Head*, after I have obſerv'd one or two Things, and the *Firſt* of them is, That however ſome of theſe Truths above-mention'd may poſſibly be made out by a Train of ſubtile Arguments; yet ſuch Arguments however they may draw an Aſſent from a thinking Man, not only tranſcend the Capacity of the Vulgar, but fail of exciting and affecting even the moſt Philoſophical Heads. For to draw forth our active Powers into Action, the Inducements muſt ſhine with a Light, that may warm the Mind as it were, not only diſſipating Doubts about the Reality of what is obſerved, but alſo ſhewing its *Excellency*. Upon this Occaſion I may not impertinently apply to the *Philoſophers*, what *Plautus* ſays of *Comic Poets*, *Le* Clerk *Parrhoſiana, Page* 52.

Spectavi ego pridem Comicos ad iſtum Modum
Sapienter Dicta dicere, atque illis plaudier,
Cum illos Sapientes Mores monſtrabant Populo;
Sed cum inde ſuam quiſque ibant diverſi Domum,
Nullus erat illo Pacto, ut illi juſſerunt.

" I have often ſeen, that after the Comic Poets have ſaid good " Things, and that they have been applauded for them, while they " taught good Manners to the People, aſſoon as they were got Home, " no Body was the better for their Advice. The other Thing I obſerve, is, That any Defect as to the Knowledge of the *Lawgiver* is ſo much the more conſiderable, than any other, that a Regard to the

Lawgiver is that which gives the *Formality* of Obedience to any Action, and therefore the less Knowledge there is of him, the less of Obedience, properly so called, there will be. Thus far we have clear'd how little *Nature's Light* can do for inforcing *Obedience* from the Discoveries it makes of the *Lawgiver*.

II. A second Head of Motives to Duty is *present Advantage*. Now if *Nature's Light* is able to prove, That *Obedience* to the *Law of Nature* is like to turn to our *present Advantage*, either as to *Profit* or *Pleasure*, this would be of Weight: But it is needless to insist on this Head; for who sees not, that there is but little to be said as to many Duties here? Are they not cross to present Inclinations? And for any Thing *Nature's Light* can discover, diametrically opposite to our *present Interest* and *Honour*; I mean according to the Notions generally intertain'd of those Things in the World? So it is but little that it can say upon this Head. How often are we so stated, that in Appearance Nothing stands in our Way to *Pleasure*, *Honour* or *Profit*, but only *the Command*? It were easy to enlarge on this Head; but since it will not be readily controverted, I wave it. And indeed it were of no Consideration, if *present Losses* were otherwise compensate by *future Advantages*.

III. If *Nature's Light* can give a full View of *future Rewards*, then this will compensate *present Disadvantages*, and be a strong Inducement to *Obedience*. But the Discovery, if it is of any Use, must be clear and lively, that it may affect and excite, as has been above observ'd. Well, what can *Nature's Light* do here? Very little, as has been above fully demonstrate, when we discours'd of the *chief End*. It remains only now that we observe that *Evils* and *Disadvantages* discouraging from Duty are *present*, *sensible*, *great*, and so *affect strongly*: Wherefore if *future Rewards* have not somewhat to ballance these, they cannot have much Influence. Now it has been made sufficiently evident, That all which *Nature's Light* has to put in the Ballance, to encourage the Mind to go on in Duty, against *present*, *sensible*, *certain* and *great Discouragements*, is at most, but a *dark*, *conjectural Discovery* of *Rewards*, or rather *Suspicion* about them after Time, without telling us what they are, or wherein they do consist. Will this ever prevail with Men to obey? No, it cannot. The *Prospect* of *future Rewards* was not that which prevail'd with the most *moral* amongst the *Heathens* of old. Their Knowledge of these Things, if they had any, was of little or no Use or Influence to them, as to their *Excitement* to *Vertue*.

IV. *Nature's*

IV. *Nature's Light* is no leſs *defective* as to the *Diſcovery of Puniſhments*: For however the *Forebodings* of guilty Conſciences, a dark Tradition handed down from Generation to Generation, and ſome *exemplary Inſtances* of divine Severity, have kept ſome Impreſſions of *Puniſhment* on the Minds of many in all Ages; yet it is well known, that thoſe Things were ridicul'd by moſt of the *Philoſophers*, the *Poets Fictions* made them contemptible, and the daily Inſtances of *Impunity* of Sinners here weakned the Impreſſions. Beſides, *Evils* that follow Duty, and *Loſſes* ſuſtain'd, are *ſenſible*, *preſent*, *certain*, *known*, and ſo *affect ſtrongly*, and therefore are not to be ballanced by *Puniſhments*, which are not, or rather, at leaſt, are rarely executed in Time, and where-of there is little diſtinct Evidence after Time. For be it granted that the *Juſtice* and *Holineſs* of GOD render it incredible that ſo many Tranſgreſſors as eſcape unpuniſhed here, ſhould get off ſo; yet certain it is, That *Nature's Light* can no Way inform *what Puniſhments* ſhall be inflicted.

V. *Nature's Light* can never point us to *Examples* which may have any Influence. There are but few of thoſe who wanted *Revelation*, even of the *Philoſophers*, who were not tainted with groſs Vices. We have ſtrange Stories told of *a Socrates*; and yet after all, he was but a ſorry Example of *Vertue*. He is frequently by *Plato* introduc'd *Swearing*. He is known to have baſely comply'd with the *Way of Worſhip* follow'd by his Country, which was the more impious, that it is to be ſuppos'd to be againſt the Perſwaſion of his Conſcience; yea we find him with his laſt Breath, ordering his Friend to ſacrifice the Cock he had vow'd to *Eſculapius*. *M. Dacier's* Apology for him is perfectly impertinent. He is accus'd of *impure Amours* with *Alcibiades*, and of proſtituting his Wife's Chaſtity for Gain. It is evident that in the Whole of his Conduct, he ſhews but little Regard to GOD. Such are *the Examples* we are to expect here. We might give full as bad Account of the *fam'd Seneca*, were it neceſſary to inſiſt on this Head, not to mention others of leſs Conſideration.

Now to conclude, how ſhall we by Nature's Light be prevail'd on to obey, while it gives ſo unſatisfying Diſcoveries of the Law and Lawgiver? Can ſhew ſo little of preſent or future Advantage by Obedience, or Diſadvantage by Diſobedience? Nor can it offer any Examples that are worth following.

'Tis certain that the Experience of the World juſtifies this Account. What means it, that Inſtances of any Thing like *Vertue* are ſo rare, where-

where *Revelation* obtains not? Sure it must say on of Two, if not both; that either *Nature's Light* presents *no Inducements* sufficient to influence *Practice*, or that Man is *dreadfully corrupt*: The *Deists* may chuse which, or both, and let them avoid the Consequences if they can.

It had been easy to have said a great Deal more on this Head. The Subject would have admitted of considerable Enlargement; but this my Design will not allow. I intend to keep close to the Argument, and run out no further than is of Necessity for clearing the Force of that. And where the Case is plain, as I take it to be here, I content my self with touching at the *Heads* which clear the *Truth* under Debate.

CHAP. IX.

Shewing the Importance of knowing the Origin of Sin to the World. And the Defectiveness of Nature's Light as to this.

IT is not more clear that the Sun shines, than that the *whole World lies in Wickedness*. The *Creation* groans under the Weight of this unweildy Load, which lies so heavy upon it, that it is the Wonder of all who have any right Notions of the *Justice* or *Holiness* of GOD, that it has not sunk it into *Nothing*, or *exquisite Misery* before now. The *Heathens* have made bitter Complaints of it. And indeed if their Complaints had been left upon themselves, and had not been turn'd into Accusations of the *Holy GOD*, none could have wondred at them, or condemn'd them. For it is manifest to any one who will not stop his Ears, put out his Eyes, stifle his Conscience, forswear and abandon his Reason, that *the World is full of Sin*. What Nation or Place is free of *Idolatries*, *Blasphemies*, the raging of *Pride*, *Revenge*, *Perjuries*, *Rapes*, *Adulteries*, *Thefts*, *Robberies*, *Murders*, and other abominable Evils innumerable? And who sees not, that all these

are

are the Effects of ſtrong, prevailing, univerſal and contagious Corruptions and deprav'd Inclinations; from a Share in which, no Man can juſtly pretend himſelf free? And if he ſhould, any one who ſtrictly obſerves his Way, may eaſily implead him, either of *groſs Ignorance* or *Diſingenuity*.

To know how Things came to this Paſs with the *World*, and trace *this Evil* to its Fountain, is a Buſineſs of great Importance to *Religion*. Yea, of ſo much Moment is it, that one can ſcarce tell how any Thing like *Religion* is to be maintain'd in the *World*, without ſome competent Knowledge of it.

1. If this is not known, we can never make any right Eſtimate of the *Evil* of *Sin*. If Men were by their original Conſtitution, without their own Fault, made of ſo wicked or infirm a Nature, as that either they were inclin'd to it, or unable to reſiſt Temptations, amongſt the Throng of which they were plac'd, it is impoſſible for them to look upon *Sin* as ſo deteſtable an *Evil* as realy it is; or blame themſelves ſo much for it, as yet they are bound to do. If it is quite otherwiſe, and Man were originally upright, and fell not into this Caſe, but by a Fault juſtly chargeable on him, 'tis certain, that quite other Apprehenſions of *Sin* ſhould be maintain'd. Now ſuch as Mens Apprehenſions are about the *Evil* of *Sin*, ſuch will their Care be to avoid it, prevent it, or get it remov'd. And who ſees not, that the Whole of *Religion* is eaſily reducible to theſe Things?

2. If the *Origin* of *Sin* is not underſtood, Man can never underſtand what he is oblig'd to in Way of Duty. If we derive *this Weakneſs*, *Wickedneſs* and *deprav'd Inclination* from our *firſt Conſtitution*, we can never look on our ſelves as oblig'd to ſuch an *Obedience*, as the *Rectitude*, *Holineſs*, and *Purity* of the *divine Nature*, ſeems to render neceſſary. And if we are uncertain as to this, we ſhall never know how far our Duty extends. And if we know not what is requir'd of us, how can we do it? To ſay we are bound to obey as far as we can, is to ſpeak Nonſenſe, and what no Way ſatisfies the Difficulty: For this leaves us to judge of our own *Power*, opens a Door to Man to interpret the *Law* as he pleaſes, and charges GOD with ſuch Folly in the Frame of the *Law*, as we dare ſcarce charge on any *humane Lawgiver*.

3. Without the Knowledge of the *Origin* of *Sin*, we can never know what Meaſures to take, in ſubduing our *corrupt Inclinations*. If we know not of what Nature they are, how they came to be ſo interwoven with our Frame, and ſo much of a Piece with our ſelves, we ſhall not know

know where to begin Attempts for *Reformation*, or if it be practicable to eradicate them. And yet this must be done, otherwise we cannot with any Shew of Reason project *Happiness*. But the *Rise* of *Corruption* being hid, we shall neither know what is to be remov'd, nor where to begin our Work, nor how far Success to Attempts of this Kind may reasonably be hop'd for. And of how destructive Consequence this is to *all Religion* is easily seen.

4. If the *Origin* of *Sin* is not known, we will be at a Loss what Thoughts to intertain of GOD his *Holiness*, *Justice* and *Goodness*, yea and his *Wisdom* too. If our Natures were originally burdened with those corrupt Inclinations so twisted in with them, as now we find them; or if we were so infirm, as not to be able to resist a Throng of Temptations, among which we were plac'd, we will scarce be able to entertain such a high Regard for God's *Holiness*, *Goodness* and *Wisdom* in our *Make*, or of his *Justice* in dealing so by us. And if we suppose otherwise, we will still be confounded by our Darkness about any other Way we can possibly think of, whereby Things were brought to this Pass, and Mankind so universally precipitate into so miserable a Case.

5. If the *Origin* of *Evil* is not known, we shall never be able to judge what Estimate GOD will make of *Sin*: Whether he will look on it as *so evil* as to demerite any deep Resentment, or otherwise.

6. Hereon it follows, That the whole State of our Affairs with GOD, will be quite darkned and become unintelligible. We shall not know whether he shall Animadvert so heavily on us for *our Sins*, as to ruin us, or so slightly pass over them, as not to call us to an Account. If the Latter is suppos'd, *Obedience* is *ruin'd*; considering what Man's Inclinations and Temptations are: Who will obey, if no *Ruin* or *Hurt* is to be fear'd by *Sin*? If the Former is suppos'd, our *Hope* is *ruin'd*. We shall not know what Value GOD will put on *our Obedience*, if this is not known; whether he will not reject it for the sinful Defects cleaving to it. Nor shall we know whether he will pardon us, or upon what Terms, if we know not what Thoughts he has of *Sin*. And this we know not, nor can we possibly understand, unless we know how it came, and came to be so twisted in with our Natures.

Finally, Hereon depends any tolerable Account of the *Equity of GOD's Proceedings*, at least of his *Goodness* in dealing so with the World, subjecting it to such a Train of Miseries. If any Thing of *Sin* is chargeable justly upon Man's *Make* and *first Constitution*, it will be

be much to clear his *Juſtice*, but harder to acquite his *Goodneſs* in plaguing the World ſo. If otherwiſe, it will be eaſy to juſtify GOD: But how then were Men brought to this Caſe?

Thus we have ſhortly hinted at thoſe Grounds that clear the Importance of the Caſe. An Inlargement on them would have made the dulleſt underſtand, that without ſome ſatisfying Account of the *Origin of Evil*, all *Religion* is left looſe. The judicious will eaſily ſee it. It now remains that we make appear the *Inſufficiency of Nature's Light*. To clear this Point, 'tis evident if we conſider,

1. That moſt of the wiſe Men of the World have paſs'd over this in Silence, as a Speculation too hard and high. The Effects of it were ſo ſenſible, that they could not but notice them, as the *Egyptians* did the Overflowing of their *Nile*. But when they would have trac'd theſe Streams up to their Source, they were forc'd to quit it as an unequal Chace. The Reaſon whereof is ingeniouſly, as well as ſolidly given by the judicious Dr. *Stillingfleet*, " The Reaſon " was, ſays he, as *Corruption* increas'd in the " World, ſo the Means of Inſtruction and Know- " ledge decay'd; and ſo as the *Phænomina* grew " greater, the Reaſon of them was leſs underſtood: The Knowledge " of the Hiſtory of the firſt Ages of the World, through which they " could alone come to the full Underſtanding of the true Cauſe of *Evil*, " inſenſibly decaying in the ſeveral Nations; inſomuch that thoſe " who are not at all acquainted with that Hiſtory of the World, which " was preſerved in ſacred Records among the *Jews*, had Nothing " but their own uncertain Conjectures to go by, and ſome Kind of ob- " ſcure Traditions, which were preſerved among them, which, while " they ſought for to rectifie by their Interpretations, they made them " more obſcure and falſe than they found them. *Origines Sacræ*, *Lib.* 3. *Cap.* 3. *Sect.* 8.

2. Others who would needs appear more learn'd, but were really leſs wiſe, offer'd Accounts, or pretended to ſay ſomewhat, rather to hide their own Ignorance, than explain what they ſpoke of. So obſcure are they, that Nothing can be concluded from what they ſay, but that they were *ignorant*, and yet ſo diſingenuous and proud that they would not own it. Among this Sort *Plato* is reck'ned, and with him *Pythagoras*, who tell us, " That the *Principle of* " *Good is Unity, Finite, Quieſcent, Streight, un-* " *even Number, Square, Right and Splendid; The* " *Principle of Evil, Binary, Infinite, Crooked, Even,* Orig. Sacræ. ibid. Sect. 11.

" *Long of one Side, Unequal, Left, Obscure.* *Plutarch*, as is noted by Dr. *Stillingfleet*, says, That the Opinion of *Plato* is very obscure, it being his Purpose to conceal it; but he saith in his old Age, *in his Book de Legibus*, ἐ δι' αἰνιγμῶν ἀλλὰ συμβολικῶς. without any Riddle and Allegory, he asserts the World to be mov'd by more than *one Principle*, by two at the least; the one of a *good and benign Nature*, the other *contrary* to it, both in it's *Nature* and *Operations* τὴν μὲν ἀγαθοεργὸν εἶναι, τὴν δὲ ἀντίαν ταύτῃ καὶ τῷ ἔργῳ ἐπιμαργον

3. Another, and perhaps the greater Part, did plainly give the most absurd and ridiculous, not to say blasphemous, Accounts of this Matter. Some pretending all the *Vitiosity inherent in Matter*, which they suppos'd *not created*. The Folly, as well as Wickedness of this Opinion, is well laid open by the judicious Person last quoted. This was what *Plato* aim'd at, as Dr. *Stillingfleet* clears from *Numenius* a famous *Syrian Platonick Philosopher* who is thought to have liv'd in the *second Century*, who giving an Account of *Pythagoras* and *Plato*'s Opinions, says, *Pythagoras ait*, " *Existente Providentia, Mala quoque necessario sub-*
" *stitisse propterea quod* Sylva *sit & eadem sit Malitia prædita*: Plato-
" nemque *idem* Numenius *laudat, quod duas Mundi Animas autumet; Unam*
" *beneficentissimam; malignam alteram scil.* Sylvam. *Igitur juxta* Platonem
" *Mundo Bona Jua Dei, tanquam Patris Liberalitate collata sunt; Mala*
" *vero Matris* Sylvæ *Vitio cohæserunt.* The plain Case is, they thought GOD and *Matter eternally coexistent*, and that *Vitiosity* was *inherent in Matter*, and that GOD could not mend it. To this Purpose *Maximus Tyrius* a *Platonick Philosopher*, who liv'd in the *second Century*, speaks, *That all the Evils that are in the World, are not the Works of Art, but the Affections of Matter.* *Seneca* says, *Non potest* Seneca *Artifex mutare Materiam.* This Way the *Stoicks* went. Max. Tyr. Ser. 25. de Provid.

Tho' they who have studied them, pretend that there was some Difference betwixt *Plato*'s Opinion and theirs. They who would desire a more full Account, both of these Opinions, and the Absurdity and Impiety of them, may have it from Dr. *Stillingfleet*. But a great many of the *Philosophers* plainly maintain'd *two Anti-gods*, one *Good* and the other *Evil*. The *Persians* had their *Oromasdes*, to whom they ascrib'd all *the Good*, and *Arimanius*, on whom they father'd all *their Evils*. How many run this Way, any one may learn from *Plutarch's Discourse* of *Isis* and *Osiris*, and judge whether he himself was not of the same Mind. What was it that drove those great

Men

Men on ſuch wild Conceits, which are ſo abſurd that they are not worth confuting? Nothing elſe but their Darkneſs about the *Riſe of Sin*. And how diſmal were the Conſequences of thoſe Notions and of this Darkneſs? What elſe drove ſo great a Part of the World to that Madneſs, to worſhip even the *Principle of Evil*? Was it not this, That they entertain'd perverſe Notions about the *Origin of Evils* both of *Sin* and *Puniſhment*?

4. Not to inſiſt on thoſe abſurd Opinions, the later Accounts we have of this Matter, by Perſons who reject *the Scriptures*, after they have taken all the Help from them they think meet, tho' they are more poliſh'd, are not one Whit more ſatisfactory. For clearing this, we ſhall offer you the moſt conſiderable of this Sort that have occurr'd to us. We ſhall begin with *Simplicius* a *Phrygian Philoſopher* who liv'd in the *fifth Century*, and was a great Oppoſer of the *Scriptures*. He in his Commentary upon the XXXIV Chapter of *Epictetus*, ſpeaks thus, " The Soul of Man is *Nexus utriuſque Mundi*, in the Middle between thoſe more *excellent Beings*, which remain above (which he had taught to be *incapable of Sin*) with which it partakes in the Sublimity of its Nature and Underſtanding, and thoſe inferior terreſtrial *Beings*, with which it communicates through the vital Union which it hath with the Body, and by Reaſon of that Freedom and Indifferency which it hath, it is ſometimes aſſimulated to the one, ſometimes to the other of thoſe Extremes. So that while it approacheth to the Nature of the *ſuperior Beings*, it keeps it ſelf free from *Evil*; but becauſe of its Freedom, it may ſometimes ſink down into thoſe lower Things, and ſo he calls the *Cauſe of Evil* in the Soul, its *voluntary Deſcent into this lower World*, and *immerſing it ſelf in the Feculency of terreſtrial Matter*. Much more he adds; but it all comes to this, That becauſe of the Freedom of the Will of Man, nothing elſe can be ſaid to be the *Author of Evil*, but the *Soul*. *Comment. in* Epict. *Cap.* 34.

We have likewiſe an Account from the *Oracles of Reaſon* much to the ſame Purpoſe. *A. W.* a *Deiſt* in a Letter to *Charles Blount* anſwering an Objection of Sir *Charles Wolſeley*'s, againſt the *Sufficiency of natural Religion*, gives this Account, " This general acknowledg'd Lapſe of Nature, that it came, may be diſcovered by *natural Light*; how it came, is reaſonable to conclude without *Revelation*, namely, by a *Deviation* from the *right Rule of* *Oracles of Reaſon*, *Page* 197.

" *Reason* implanted in us; how he came to deviate from *this Rule*, or " lapse, proceeds from the *Nature of Goodness*, originally given us, " by our Creator, which Reason tells us to be an *arbitrary State of* " *Goodness* only; therefore not a *necessary Goodness* to which our Na- " tures were constrain'd. In short, our Fall proceeds from our not " being able to reason rightly on every Thing we act, and with *such* " *Beings* we were created: For all our Actions are design'd by us to " *some Good* which may arise to us: But we do not always distin- " guish rightly of *that Good*: We often mistake *Bonum apparens* for " the *Bonum reale. Decipimur Specie Recti.* The *Bonum jucundum* for " Want of right Reasoning, is preferr'd to the *Bonum honestum*; and the " *Bonum vicinum*, tho' it be less in it self, often carries it before the " *Bonum remotum*, which is greater in its own Nature. No Man ever " held that we could *appetere Malum qua Malum*; and therefore I will " not grant him a total Lapse in our Natures from GOD. For we see " many born with vertuous Inclinations; and tho' all Men at some- " times err, even the Best, in their Actions, it only shews that we " were not created to a *necessitated Goodness*. 'Tis enough to prove no " fatal Lapse, that many are prov'd, through the Course of their " Lives, more prone to do *Good* than *Evil*, and that all Men do *Evil* " only for Want of *right Reasoning*; because the *Will* necessarly follows " the *last Dictate of the Understanding*. The next and last whom we shall mention, is, the learn'd *Herbert*, whom the rest do but copy after. Thus then he accounts for it; " *Quod ad Ma-*

De Religione Gentilium, Cap. 13. P. 164.

" *lum Culpæ spectat, hoc quidem non aliunde prove-* " *nire, quem ab Arbitrio illo omnibus insito, inge-* " *nitoque, quod tanquam Bonum eximium Deus* " *Optimus Maximus nobis largitus est; ex quo* " *etiam a Belluis magis quam ipso Intellectu distinguimur: Quum tamen* " *adeo ancipitis sit Naturæ, ut in utramque Partem flecti possit, fit ut in* " *Malum sæpe propendeat & dilabatur: Cæterum per se est Beneficium* " *plane Divinum, ejusque Amplitudinis & Præstantiæ, ut citra illud, ne-* " *que boni esse possemus: Ecquis enim boni aliquid efficere dicitur, nisi* " *quando in adversam Partem datur Optio? Hinc igitur Malum Culpæ* " *accidere, quod nobilissima Animæ Facultas, in sequiorem sua sponte Par-* " *tem, nulloque cogente traducatur detorqueaturque.*

These three Accounts, in several Respects, run the same Way. It were easy however to set them by the Ears in some considerable Particulars, and perhaps, to shew the Inconsistency of the several Authors with

with themſelves, on theſe Heads: But this is not my Deſign to ſpend Time on Things, whereby Truth will not gain much, as, perhaps, they contain the Sum of what *Reaſon* can ſay on the Head, ſo we ſhall now ſhew how very far they are from ſatisfying in the Caſe. The Subſtance of them may be reduc'd to thoſe three Propoſitions.

1. *That Man's Body ſways the Soul, to which it is join'd, to Things ſuitable to it ſelf, which are Evil.* This *Simplicius* more than inſinuates.

2. *That as Reaſon is the Guide of the Will, which neceſſarily follows its laſt Dictate; ſo the Will's Inclination to Evil flows from our not being able to reaſon rightly.* This the Oracles of Reaſon give plainly as a Reſponſe in the Words now quoted.

3. *The Will is* ancipitis Naturæ, *perfectly indifferent, equally capable of, and ſway'd to Evil and Good.* This all the three concur in. Its like a nice Ballance which ſtands even, but is eaſily ſway'd to either Side.

But now it is eaſy to multiply Difficulties againſt this Account, and ſhew how it no Way clears, but rather involves the Matter more. And,

1. I would deſire to know whether that inferior Part, the *Body*, or terreſtrial Part of Man, call it which you will, ſways to any Thing, not ſuited to its *original Frame* and *Perfection*, or not? If it aims at nothing, bends or inclines to nothing, but what is *perfective* of it ſelf, I deſire to know how *that* can be faulty? How can *this Body* be made a Part of a Compoſition, wherein it is faulty for it, to aim at what is truly *perfective* of its Nature? How can it be criminal for the *Soul* to aim at enobling and ſatisfying the Capacities of that, which is ſo nearly united to it ſelf? How is it conſiſtent with the *Wiſdom* of GOD, to unite *two Beings*, the one whereof cannot reach its own Perfection without Hurt to the other? If it is ſaid, That it inclines to what contributes not to its *own Perfection*; then I deſire to know how it came to be ſo deprav'd as to have a Tendency to its *own Detriment*? How it was conſiſtent with the *Wiſdom* of GOD to make it ſo? How was it conſiſtent with the *Goodneſs* of GOD to aſſociate it, when ſo made, with another more *noble Being* to which it muſt prove a Burden; yea, which muſt ſway to that; which proves the Ruin of the whole Compoſition? And how can Man be blam'd for doing that, to which his Nature inevitably muſt carry him? For if he is thus compounded, his *Body*, earthly Part, or lower Faculties ſway to *Evil*; his

Will

Will is equally inclinable to both; and, in this Case, how can the Compofition be otherwife, than deprav'd? For my Part I fee not how it could be otherwife; or how GOD can juftly punifh it for being fo, upon the Suppofition laid down.

2. If it be aſſerted that we are not, by *our original Conſtitution*, able to *reaſon rightly*, in what concerns our *own Duty*, as we have heard from *the Oracles of Reaſon*; then I deſire to know if we are not neceſſitate by our very *Make* and Conſtitution to err? If we are to believe, what the ſame *Oracle* utters, that the *Will* muſt follow neceſſarly the *Underſtanding*; then I deſire to know, if we are not neceſſitate to Sin? If Things are thus and thus, we muſt either believe them to *be*, or believe that this *Oracle* gives a falſe Reſponſe; then I deſire to know how GOD could make us neceſſarily Evil? How can he puniſh us for it? How can this be reconcil'd with the reſt of this Doctrine, about the arbitrary State of Man's Goodneſs? I might aſk not a few other Queries, but perhaps theſe will ſuffice.

3. If the *Will* be, in its own Nature, perfectly free and indifferent, then I deſire to know, whether there is any Thing in that Compoſition, whereof it is a Part, or to which it is join'd, or any Thing in the Circumſtances wherein Man is plac'd, ſwaying it to the worſt Side? If there is any Thing either in Man's Conſtitution or Circumſtances, ſwaying him wrong; then I deſire to know, is there any Thing to ballance them? Whether there is, or is not any Thing to keep him even? I would deſire to know how any Thing came to be in his Conſtitution, to ſway him wrong? If there is any Thing to ballance theſe Inducements to *Sin*, or Inclinations, then Man is perfectly indifferent ſtill: And about this we ſhall ſpeak anon. If there is a *Will*, equally capable of *Good* and *Evil*, and Man has ſomewhat in his Conſtitution or Circumſtances, at leaſt ſwaying him to *Evil*, then I deſire to know, how it was poſſible for him to evite it? If he has nothing determining him more to *Evil* than to *Good*, or if any Thing that inclines to *Evil* is ballanced, by other Things of no leſs Force, determining and ſwaying him to *Good*, then many Things may be enquir'd: How comes it to paſs, that tho' Man is equally inclinable to *Good* or *Evil*, that all Men almoſt chooſe *Evil?* Yea I need not put an *almoſt* to it. It is a ſtrange Thing to ſuppoſe all Men equally diſpos'd to *Good* or *Evil*, and yet none chooſe the *Good*.

4. I do not know how this Notion of *Man's Liberty*, which is eaſily granted to be in it ſelf, if the Notion of it is rightly ſtated, a *Perfection*, will

will take with conſiderate Men, that it conſiſts in a *perfect Indifferency to Good or Evil*: For if this is a neceſſary Perfection of the rational Nature, without which it cannot be call'd *Good*, as *Herbert* clearly aſſerts, in his Words above quoted; then I aſk, What ſhall become of thoſe Natures *unalterably Good*, of which *Simplicius* talks? Is it abſurd to ſuppoſe, that there may be ſuch? Are they, if they be, leſs perfect, becauſe uncapable of that which debaſes and depraves them? Is GOD *Good*, who has beyond Diſpute no ſuch *Liberty* as this? Is an *Indifferency* to commit Sin or not to ſin, a great Perfection? If it be, is it greater, than not to be capable of ſinning? They may imbrace this Notion of *Liberty* who will, and fancy themſelves perfect, I ſhall not for this reckon them ſo.

5. This Account of Man as equally inclin'd to *Good* or *Evil*, is either an Account of Man's Caſe as he now is, or as at firſt made: If Man is now otherwiſe, to wit, inclin'd more to *Evil* than *Good*, how came he to be ſo? This is the Difficulty we deſire to be ſatisfy'd about. If this be the Caſe he was made in, and ſtill continues in, then, I ſay, it is utterly falſe, and contradictory to the Ears, Eyes and Conſcience of all the World. Who ſees not that Man is plainly, ſtrongly, and I may add univerſally inclin'd to *Evil*? The wiſer *Heathens* have own'd it. And it is plainly made out againſt the moſt impudent Denyer. *Hierocles*'s Words, as I find them tranſlated by an excellent Perſon, are memorable to this Purpoſe. " Man, " ſays he, is of his own Motion inclin'd to " follow the Evil and leave the Good. There a " certain Strife bred in his Affections; he hath a " free Will, which he abuſeth, binding himſelf " wholly to encounter the Laws of GOD. And this Freedom it ſelf is " nothing elſe, but a Willingneſs to admit that which is not Good, " rather than otherwiſe. This is a true State of the Matter from a *Heathen.* Hierocles *Carmin. Aur. Tranſl. Reaſ. of Script. Belief*, P. 146.

6. The Suppoſition of Man's being made *perfectly indifferent* is *injurious* to GOD, who cannot be ſuppos'd, without Reflection on him, to have put Man in ſuch a Caſe. The leaſt that can be ſaid, preſerving the Honour due to the *Divine Excellencies*, is that GOD gave a *Law* to Man, ſuitable to the *Rectitude* of his *own Nature* and to *Man's Happineſs* and *Perfection*; that he endued him with an Ability to know *this Law*, the Obligations he lay under to obey it, and the Inducements that might have fortify'd him in his Obedience againſt the Force of

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any Temptation which he might meet with. If this be not asserted, it will not be possible to keep GOD from *Blame*, which all that own him, are concern'd to take Care of: For how could he bind Man to obey *a Law*, which he did not make known to him, or at least gave him a Power to know? If he laid him open to Temptations, and made him incapable of discovering, what might antidote their Force, if he would use it, what shall we think of his *Goodness?* Further, we must own that the *Will* of Man was made inclinable, tho' not immutably so, to its own Perfection: How else was it worthy of its Author? Finally, we must own that Man had no Affection or Inclination in him, that was really contradictory to that *Law*, which he was subjected to, and which tended to his Happiness and Perfection. If this is deny'd, then I ask, Were not these Inclinations sinful? Was that *Being* worthy of GOD, that had no Tendency to its own Perfection? But on the contrary, what was inclinable to its own Ruin?

7. This being the least, that can without manifest Reproach to the *Wisdom*, *Goodness* and *Justice* of the *Creator*, be suppos'd in Favours of Man's *original Constitution*; I desire to know, is this the Case still, or is it not? If it is not, then how came it to be otherwise? How comes Man originally to be worse now, than at first? How is this consistent with the *Deists* Principles, that there is no Lapse? If it be asserted, we are in the same State still, how then comes all the World to be full of Wickedness? How is this reconcilable with the Experiences and Consciences of Men, that assures them of the contrary?

8. If it is thought enough to resolve all this, as to *actual Failings*, into the *Choice* of Man; yet what shall we say as to that *Darkness* as to Duty, which we heard the *Deists* confessing, in their *Oracles of Reason?* How came that *Inability* to Reason rightly, which we have before demonstrated Man under, and which our Adversaries will own! Again how come we to have vitious Inclinations so strongly rooted in our Natures! Strong they are; for they trample upon our *Light*, the *Penalties* of *Laws Divine* and *Humane*; yea and the *Smartings* of our own *Conscience*. The Drunkard and unclean Person finds his Health ruin'd, and yet in Spight of this, his Inclination makes him run on in the Vice that has ruin'd him: And the like is evident in other Cases innumerable. Deeply rooted they are: They are some Way twisted in with the Constitutions of our Body, and no less fix'd in our Souls. So fix'd they are, that, tho' our own Reason condemns them, it cannot remove them. Tho' sometimes Fear restrains them as to the *outward Acts*;

Acts; yet it cannot eradicate the *Inclination*. Instruction and all humane Endeavours cannot do it. A fam'd *Seneca* that understood so much, who undertook to teach others, and perhaps has spoke and writ better than most of the *Heathens*; yet by all his Knowledge and all his Endeavours, owns *this Corruption* so deeply rooted in himself, that he expected not to get rid of it. *Non perveni ad Sanitatem, ne perveniam quidem: Delinimentis magis quam Remedia Podagræ meæ compono, contentus si rarius accedit, & si minus terminatur.*

9. Not only so, but further, how come *these Inclinations* to be born with us? Grow up with us? That they are so, is evident. We no sooner begin to act, than to act perversly. We no sooner shew any Inclinations, than we shew that our Inclinations are *evil*. Yea, among *Christians*, where there are many vertuous Persons, who give the best Example, the best Instruction, and use the best Discipline for the Education of their Children in Vertue; yet we see the Children discover Inclinations so strong, as are not to be restrain'd by all these Endeavours, much less eradicated: And, so early are they there, that they cannot be prevented by the most timeous Care.

10. It will not help the Matter to tell us, That there are some born with vertuous Inclinations. For 1. If all are not so, the Difficulty remains. How came these to be born otherwise, of whom we have been speaking! How came their Frame to be different from, nay and worse than that of others! Are they under the same Law? If so, why have they no Impediments, and less Power of Obedience? 2. We would be glad to see the Persons condescended on, that are void of *vitious Inclinations*, that we might ask them some Questions. You say you are born with *vertuous Inclinations*. Well, but have you no *ill Inclinations?* If you are no Drunkard, Adulterer, &c. yet have you *no Inclination* to *Pride*, *Prodigality*, *Neglect of GOD*, *Covetousness*, or somewhat like? I fear the Man that can answer plainly in the Negative here, will not be easily found. And till we see him, we deny there is any such. 3. To confirm this, several Persons, whom the World has look'd on as vertuously inclin'd from their Infancy, have, when seriously acquainted with Christianity, own'd that they were as wickedly inclin'd as others; only by Help of their Constitution, they were not so much prompted to those Evils, which are most observed and condemn'd in the World. And this Account has been given by Persons of Judgment, whose Capacity, nor Ingenuity cannot reasonably be question'd. Finally, the Ground whereon *A. W.* pronounces against an *universal Lapse*, *viz.*

That we cannot *appetere Malum qua Malum*, is ridiculous: For this is a Thing perfectly inconsistent, not only with the due Exercise, but the very Nature of our rational Faculties: And if notwithstanding this Impossibility of any Man's desiring *Evil as Evil*, so many are deeply corrupted, no imaginable Reason can be assign'd, why all may not be so, without supposing that we can *appetere Malum qua Malum*.

To conclude then, it is upon the Whole evident, That *Reason* can never trace this Matter to its proper Source. Our Consciences condemn us indeed, and so acquit the Deity. But without *Revelation*, we can never understand upon what Grounds we are condemn'd by our selves, nor how the Deity is to be justified; and so this Sentence of our Consciences involves the Matter more and increases the Difficulty. It is not from any distinct View of the particular Way how we come to be guilty, and how GOD comes to be free of Blame, that Conscience is led to this Sentence. And therefore, how to come to any Satisfaction about the Matter, that may liberate us from the Inconveniencies above-mention'd, which are really subversive of *all Religion*, and can reasonably be suppos'd available to us, *Reason* can never satisfy us.

Since these Gentlemen, with whom we have to do, find it their Interest to deny any *Lapse*, I shall, to what has been said, add a short, but judicious and solid Confirmation of this, from a Person of a more than ordinary Reach, I mean Dr. *How*: Who, after he has quoted many Testimonies, from *Heathen Authors*, proving this *Lapse*, reasons for it, and confirms it further from Arguments not easily to be answered: His Words run thus,

Dr. How's *Living Temple*, Part 2. P. 121, 122.

" If we consider, can it be so much as imaginable to us, That the " present State of Man, is his *primitive State*, or " that he is now such, as he was at first made? " For neither is it conceivable, the blessed " GOD should have made a Creature, with an " Aversion to the only important Ends, whereof " it is *naturally capable*: Or particularly that he created Man, with " a Disaffection to himself; or, that ever he, at first, design'd a *Being* " of so high Excellency, as the Spirit of Man, to trudge so meanly, " and be so basely servile, to terrene Inclinations; or, since there are " manifestly Powers in him, of a superior and inferior Sort and Order, " the meaner should have been, by *original Institution*, fram'd to " command; and the more noble, and excellent, only to obey, and " serve;

" ſerve; as now every one that obſerves, may ſee the common Caſe
" with Man is.

" And how far he is ſwerved from what he was, is eaſily conjecturable
" by comparing him with the *Meaſures*, which ſhew what he *ſhould*
" be. For it cannot be conceiv'd for what End Laws were ever given
" him; if at leaſt, we allow them not the *Meaſures* of his *primitive*
" *Capacity*, or deny him ever to have been in a *Poſſibility to obey*.
" Could they be intended for his Government, if Conformity to them
" were *againſt*, or *above* his Nature? Or were they only for his Con-
" demnation? Or *for what*, if he was never capable of obeying them?
" How inconſiſtent were it with the *Goodneſs* of the bleſſed GOD,
" that the Condemnation of his Creatures ſhould be the *firſt Deſign* of
" his giving them Laws! And with his *Juſtice*, to make his Laws the
" Rule of *Puniſhment*, to whom they could never be the Rule of *Obedi-*
" *ence* and *Duty!* Or with his *Wiſdom*, to frame a Syſteme and Body
" of Laws, that ſhould never ſerve for either Purpoſe! And ſo be,
" upon the Whole, uſeful for nothing. The common Reaſon of
" Mankind teacheth us to eſtimate the *Wiſdom* and *Equity* of Law-
" givers, by the Suitableneſs of their Conſtitutions to the Genius and
" Temper of the People, for whom they are made; and we commonly
" reckon nothing can more ſlur and expoſe *Government*, than the
" impoſing of Conſtitutions, moſt probably impracticable, and which
" are never likely to obtain. How much more incongruous muſt it be
" eſteem'd to enjoin ſuch as never poſſibly could! Prudent Legiſlators,
" and ſtudious of the common Good, would be ſhy to impoſe upon
" Men, under their Power, againſt their Genius and common Uſages,
" neither alterable eaſily, nor to any Advantage; much more abſurd
" were it, with great *Solemnity*, and *weighty Sanctions*, to enact Statutes,
" for brute Creatures: And wherein were it more to Purpoſe, to
" preſcribe unto Men ſtrict Rules of Piety and Vertue, than to Beaſts
" or Trees, if the former had not been capable of obſerving them,
" as the latter were not? I believe the *Deiſts* will not eaſily overthrow
this nervous Diſcourſe.

CHAP. X.

Proving Nature's Light unable to discover the Means of obtaining Pardon of Sin, or to shew that it is attainable.

THAT *all have sinn'd* is sufficiently clear from the foregoing Discourse. That it is of Importance to understand the *Rise* of *Sin*, and that *Nature's Light* is unable to trace its Original, has been likewise evinc'd. But all this were indeed of less Consideration, if *Nature's Light* could assure us of *Pardon*, or direct as to the Means whereby it may be obtain'd. But here it is no less defective, than as to the former. That we are all guilty of Sin, even the *Deists* do acknowledge; the *Oracles of Reason* own that *all Men at sometimes err, even the best, in their Actions.* And the Evidence of it is such, that none can get over the Truth, if he is not plainly resolv'd to deny what is most evident. Now this being the Case, that we have all transgress'd; it is of the highest Importance, to know, whether GOD will *pardon* us, or upon *what Terms* he will do it? If he punish us, what a Case are we in? How can they, who fear *Punishment*, expect *Rewards*! But because this is a Difficulty of no small Importance, and the *Deists*, since they see they cannot clear it, they make it their Business to obscure the Importance of the Case, and render it more involved; we shall therefore,

I. *State the Case, and clear the Importance of it.*
II. *Discover the Weakness of Nature's Light* about it.
III. *Speak fully to a particular Exception about Repentance.*

SECT. I.

Wherein the Importance of the Difficulty is stated.

IF the *Deists* should allow *Sin* to be so great an *Evil*, as we pretend it is, it would exceedingly embarass them; therefore they labour to smooth the Matter by telling us, That either it is no *Evil*, or one

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of not ſo *great Conſideration*, as is commonly imagin'd: But the Wildneſs and Unreaſonableneſs of this Attempt will be eaſily remov'd, by a Conſideration of the *Evil* of *Sin*. It is not our Deſign to write largely on this Head, but only to condeſcend on a few of thoſe *Conſiderations*, whereon we inſiſt for proving *Sin* to be *exceeding ſinful*: Which, albeit they are built on rational Grounds; yet we are led to them by the Aſſiſtance of *reveal'd Light*.

1. *Sin* is a *Tranſgreſſion* of a *Law*, the *higheſt Law*, the *Law* of the *ſupreme and righteous Governour of the World*. *Where there is no Law, there is no Tranſgreſſion*. And ſuch as the *Law* is, ſuch is the *Tranſgreſſion*. There is no more juſt Way of meaſuring the *Evil* of *Sin*, than by conſidering the *Law* it violates. The *Law* bears the Impreſs of the higheſt Authority, that of the ſupreme Ruler of the Univerſe. Every Tranſgreſſion muſt therefore import, if not a Contempt, yet certainly a Want of due Regard to this Authority, which how Criminal it is in Man, who is as to *Being*, *Preſervation* and *Well-being*, every Way dependent, is eaſily underſtood. Moreover, this Law is not a meer arbitrary Appointment, but ſuch as is the *neceſſary Reſult* of the *Nature* of GOD and Man; and therefore the Violation of it, imports no leſs, than an *Accuſation of the Rectitude of GOD's Nature*, whence the *Law* reſults; and charges Unſuitableneſs thereto, upon the *Nature of Man*, as being ſo made, that, without Wrong to it ſelf, it cannot ſubject to the Rule of GOD's Government. And who ſees not how deeply this reflects on GOD?

2. *Sin* contradicts the great Deſign of Man's *Being*. *GOD made us and not we our ſelves*. It is Blaſphemy to alledge, that *Infinite Wiſdom* made ſo noble a Creature, as Man, without Deſign. Nor can it reaſonably be pretended, that the *chief Aim* of GOD in making him was any other, than his having the *Self-ſatisfaction* of having acted as became him, and having made a Work every Way worthy of his *Wiſdom* and *Holineſs*. And ſince Man alſo was capable of propoſing Deſigns, it is fooliſh to imagine, that GOD either could or would allow him to make any other his *chief End* than the *Pleaſure of GOD*; or acting ſo as to make it appear, that he was every Way worthy of his Author. But when Man ſins, he plainly counteracts what GOD deſign'd, and he was oblig'd to deſign; for he pleaſes not GOD, but himſelf; and this is, what in him lies to fruſtrate GOD of the Deſign he had in his Work, and debaſe the *Being* and *Powers* given him for the Honour

Honour of GOD, by employing them against him, and using them in Contradiction to his *declar'd Will.*

3. *Sin* misrepresents GOD. The Works of GOD bear an Impress of GOD's *Wisdom* and *Power.* Man only was made capable of representing his *moral Perfections,* his *Holiness, Justice, Truth,* and the like: But when he sins, he not only fails of his Duty, but really misrepresents GOD his Maker, as one who approves Sin, that is directly cross to his Will, which is ever congruous to the *Holiness* of his Nature; or, at least, as one, who either wants Will or Power to crush the Contraveener; and so he is represented either as *Unholy,* or *Impotent*; or one, who can tamely allow his Will to be counteracted by a Creature he has made and sustains. But what horrid Reflections are these on the Holy GOD?

4. *Sin* accuses GOD of Want of *Wisdom* and *Goodness* in appointing Laws which were not for his Creature's Good, and which he could not obey without Detriment; of *Envy,* in barring the Creature by a Law, from that which is necessary to his Happiness; of *Insufficiency,* to satisfy the Creature he has made, while he is oblig'd to seek for that elsewhere, which is not to be found in him, in the Way of Obedience; and of *Folly,* in making such a Law, as cannot be expected to be obey'd, in Regard the Creature subjected to it, gains more by breaking than by keeping of it.

Finally, to crown all, *Sin dethrones* GOD, and sets the Creature in his Room. The Honour of GOD's Law and Authority and the Sinners Good are wickedly supposed to be inconsistent, and the latter is preferr'd. The Will of the Creator and Creature cross on another, and the Creature's Will is preferr'd. The Friendship, Favour, and Sufficiency of the Deity is laid in Ballance against some other imaginary Good, and Decision is given against GOD. These are a few of the many Evils of *Sin.* They are not strain'd ones. This is not a Rhetorical Declamation against *Sin,* wherein Things are unjustly aggravate to raise *Odium* against it; but a plain Account of a few of the *Evils* of it, which yet is infinitely short of what the Case would not admit. But who can fully represent the *Evil* that strikes against *Infinite Goodness, Holiness, Justice, Wisdom,* and *supreme Authority*? Who can unfold its Aggravations, save he who knows what GOD is, and what he is to Man, and what Man is, and how many Ways he is dependent on, subject, obliged and indebted to GOD? Well therefore may Sin be said to have an *Infinity of Evil* in it.

The *Deiſts* to evade the Difficulties ariſing from this *Evil of Sin* take different Courſes. Some plainly deny any ſuch Thing as *Evil*, or that there is any Thing *morally Good* or *Bad*. *Thomas Aikenhead*, who was executed at *Edinburgh*, *January* 8. 1697, for his *Blaſphemies*, in his Paper he delivered from the Scaffold, tells us what his Thoughts were in this Matter, and upon what Grounds they were built. When in his Rational Enquiries he came to conſider, whether we were capable of offending GOD, he tells us, " That after much pondering " and ſerious Conſideration, he concluded the *Negative*. The fam'd Mr. *Hobbs* was not of a very different Mind, for he plainly aſſerts, " That there is nothing *Leviathan*, Cap. 6. " *Good* or *Evil in it ſelf*, nor any common Laws " conſtituting what is naturally juſt and unjuſt: But all Things are " to be meaſured by what every Man judgeth fit, where there is no " civil Government; and by the Laws of So- " ciety, where there is one. And elſewhere, *Hobbs*. " before Men entred into a ſtate of civil Govern- " ment, there was not any Thing *juſt* or *unjuſt*, foraſmuch as *juſt* " and *unjuſt* are the Relatives of humane Laws; every Action being " in it ſelf indifferent. And whether *Spinoza* was not of the ſame Mind, is left to thoſe to judge, who have Time and Leaſure to trace his Meaning, in his obſcure and deſignedly involved Way of writing. But ſurely this Propoſition in his *Atheiſtical Ethicks* looks very like it, " *Si Homines liberi naſcerentur (liber autem eſt juxta* Spinozam, *qui* " *ſecundum Ductum vel ex Ductu Rationis agit) nullum Boni & Mali forma-* " *rent Conceptum, quamdiu liberi eſſent.* Mr. *Hobbs* has been learnedly confuted by many, ſuch as Dr. *Cumberland*, Mr. *Tyroll*, and almoſt all who write of the *Law of Nature*. *Spinoza* has likewiſe been examin'd by *Wittichius* and many others. The firſt, *viz. Thomas Aikenhead* his Grounds I ſhall propoſe and examine.

The firſt in his own Words runs thus, " I thought, ſays he, a great " Part of *Morality*, if not all, proceeded *ex Arbitrio Hominum*, as of " that of a Kingdom, or Common-wealth, or what moſt Men think " convenient for ſuch and ſuch Ends, and theſe Ends are always " terminate upon being congruous to the Nature of Things; now " we ſee that according to Mens Fantaſie Things are congruous or " incongruous to their Natures, if not to the *Body*, yet to the *thinking* " *Faculty*.

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The Sum of this confus'd Discourse, which probably he learn'd from *Hobbs*, amounts to this; GOD has fix'd no Law to our *moral Actions*, by which they are to be regulate. These, which are call'd *moral Laws*, are only the Determinations of Governments, or the concurring Judgment of Men, concerning what they think meet to be done for their own Ends. That what some judge *meet* and *congruous*, others may find unsuitable to their Nature and Ends, and so are not oblig'd to obey. But 1. Are not all these ungrounded Assertions, whereof no Proof is offered; but the Author's deluded Fancy? Has it not been irrefragably demonstrated by as many as discourse of *moral Good* and *Evil*, that antecedently to any Government among Men, we are under *a Law*, the *Law of Nature*, and that this is the *Will of GOD*. 3. If all these had kept Silence, does not the Thing it self speak? What can be more evident, than that there is a *Law of Nature*, and that this is *the Law of GOD?* We are certain, that we are made of rational Natures, capable of Laws and Government. We are no less sure that GOD made us, and made us so. It is Self-evident, that to him who made us, it belongs to govern, and dispose of us to those Ends, for which we were made. And we by our very *Beings* are bound to obey, submit, and subject our selves to his Will and Pleasure, who made us, and on whom we every Way depend; and therefore his *Will*, if he make it known, is *a Law*, and the *highest Law* to us. Again, it's clear that this Reason, if we attend to it, tells us that some Things are to be done and some Things left undone; such as these, that we are to serve, love, obey and honour him that made us, upholds us, and on whom we every Way depend; that we are to carry toward our Fellow-creatures, as it becomes those, who have the *same Original* with us, who are subject to the *same Rule*, are oblig'd to pursue the *same Ends*; and that we are to dispose of our selves, as the Author of our Nature allows us. These are all, if not Self-evident, yet next to it, and easily deducible from Principles that are so. Further the *Reason* that's implanted in us by GOD, tells us so, we are to take what it leads us to, while duly us'd, as *the Will of GOD*, and so a *Law* to us.

Sir Ch. Wolseley *Scripture Belief*, P. 32, 33.

" For whatever Judgment GOD makes a Man
" with, concerning either himself, or other
" Things; it is GOD's Judgment, and whatever
" is his Judgment, is a Law to Man, nor can
" he neglect or oppose it without Sin; being
" in his Existence made with a necessary Subjection to GOD. Such
" and

" and ſuch Dictates being the natural Operations of our Minds, the " Being and eſſential Conſtitution of which, in right Reaſoning, we " owe to GOD; we cannot but eſteem them the Voice of GOD with- " in us, and conſequently his Law to us.

What he tells us of Mens different Apprehenſions, about what is *Right* or *Wrong* makes Nothing to the Purpoſe. That only ſhews that in many Inſtances we are in the Dark as to what is *Good* and *Evil*, which is granted; but will not infer that there is no fix'd Meaſure of *Good* and *Evil*. In many general Truths, all who apply themſelves to think, underſtand the Terms, and have the Truths propos'd, do agree. And perhaps, all that is knowable of our Duty by the *Light of Nature*, is deducible from ſuch Principles of Morality, as all rational Men who have them fairly propos'd to them, muſt aſſent to. And Deductions from Laws, when duly made, are of equal Authority with the Principles from which they are inferr'd. And finally, when Men in Purſuance of their perverſe Natures, follow what is croſs to thoſe Dictates of *Reaſon*, they are condemn'd by their own Conſciences, which ſhews them under the Obligation of a *Law*, and that acting in a Congruity to their Natures as corrupt, is not the Standard they are oblig'd to walk by, ſince their own *Reaſon* checks them for doing it. They who would deſire to have this Matter fully diſcours'd, may read others who have done it deſign'dly, of whom there is great Plenty.

His ſecond Reaſon runs thus; " Alſo we do not know what is Good " or Evil it it ſelf, if not thus, Whatſoever can be attributed to GOD, " that is *Good*; and what cannot, is *Evil*. And we know not what " can be attributed to GOD, but ſuch Things as by a Deduction we " aſcribe to him, we call *Perfect*, and ſuch we deny to be in him, we " call *Imperfect*, and ſo we moſt ignorantly commit a Circle. There " is no other Notion of Things in themſelves *Good* or *Evil*.

It is much harder to find the Senſe of theſe Words, if they have any, than to anſwer the Argument. The Deſign of it is to prove, That there is no Standard whereby we may judge what is *Good* and what is *Evil*. The Force of the Argument amounts to this, *That there is no Way how we come to know any Thing to be Good, but by this, that it may be aſcrib'd to GOD*. But we cannot know whether it is to be aſcrib'd to GOD, unleſs we know that it is *Perfect* or *Good*.

This is thin Sophiſtry, which I might eaſily expoſe, were it to any Purpoſe to diſcover the Weakneſs of that, which its Author was aſham'd of and diſown'd. As to the *firſt Propoſition*, *That there is no o-*

ther Way to know whether any Thing be Good or Evil, but this, that it can or cannot be ascrib'd to GOD. 1. The complex Proposition is false; for there are other Ways whereby we may know Things to be *Good* or *Evil*. And this holds, whether we take it in a *physical* or a *moral Sense*. We know that to be *morally Good*, which GOD injoins us to do. We know the Will of GOD in some Instances, from the Natures GOD has given us; and from these Instances, our Reasons can infer others. As to *physical Good*, we know Things to be *Good* or *Perfect*, by Acquaintance with the Nature of the Things, and by the self-evident Notions of Perfection: For there are some Things, such as *Dependence*, *Subjection*, and the like, which without any reasoning about the Matter, we understand to be Imperfect or Perfect. Assoon as we understand the Terms, and know that a Perfection is that which it is better for any *Being* to have than to want: And then what these particular Words, *Dependence*, *Subjection*, &c. signifie. This alone overthrows his whole Argument. 2. The Maxim which he fixes as a Standard, That is *Good*, which may be ascrib'd to GOD; and that is not, which may not be ascrib'd to him: If it is taken in its full Extent, is false as to *moral Good*; of which the only Question is: For it is certain, That it is *Good* for Man to be a Dependent, a Subject, *&c.* which cannot be ascrib'd to GOD. If it is taken in a *physical Sense*, it is not to the Purpose: And besides it would even in this Sense need some Caution.

As to his *other Proposition, That we cannot otherwise know what is to be ascrib'd to GOD, than by knowing that it is Good or Perfect*, it can scarce be suppos'd to speak of *Good* in a *moral Sense*; and in any other Sense it is impertinent. If it is understood in a *moral Sense*, it is likewise false, for we may know that Things which are not in their own Nature *moral Perfections*, belong to GOD; such as *Power*, *Omnipresence*, &c. If it be understood in any other Sense, we have Nothing to do with it.

The next Head that he adds is, " That all Men will confess that " any Thing may be *morally Evil* and *Good* also, and consequently any " Thing Decent or Indecent, Moral or Immoral. Neither, tho' there " were Things in themselves *Evil*, (if we do not apprehend other " Things instead of them) can we have any Inclination thereunto? " Otherwise the *Will* could wish *Evil*.

But 1. Who will grant him (in any other Sense that will be subservient to his Purpose) that *all Actions are indifferent?* I know none but Men of his own Principles. 2. As for what he pretends, That we

cannot

cannot incline to that which is in its own Nature *Evil*, unleſs it be under the Notion of *Good*, I ſee not what this ſays for him; it is enough that we can do that Action which is evil and prohibited, yea, and which we know is prohibited, to conſtitute *Sin*, and make the Sinner deeply guilty.

But not to inſiſt any further on this inconſiderable *Trifler*, whoſe undigeſted Notions ſcarce deſerve the Conſideration we have given them; and much leſs did they become the awful Gravity of the Place where they were delivered. There are others of the *Deiſts* who think it not ſafe to venture thus far: Becauſe in Effect, this overthrows all Religion and eſtabliſhes plain *Atheiſm:* Yet they mince the Matter and leſſen *Sin* as much as they can.

Herbert goes this Way, telling us the Sinner's Excuſe, That 1. " *Homines ſunt Natura ſua fragiles Peccatoque ob-* " *noxii.* 2. *Peccata Hominum non tam in Dei* Con- De Relig. Gentili- " tumeliam, *quam in* propriam Utilitatem, *ſub* lium, Cap. 5. P. 199. " Boni alicujus apparentis Obtentu *fieri plerum-* " *que*; *ac licet in eo Homines fallerentur, nihil tamen infenſo in Deum Ani-* " *mo patratum eſſe.* That is, Men are by Nature frail and liable to " Sin: And they do not ſin out of *Contempt* of GOD, but for their " *own Profit*, while Sin appears under the *Shew of Good.* And albeit " in this Men are deceiv'd, yet there is Nothing done with any ill " Deſign againſt GOD.

A. W. in his Letter to *Charles Blount*, pleads, " That tho' the Offence is committed againſt an *Oracles of Reaſ. P.*--- " Infinite Being, we are but finite Creatures, " who commit Sin.

But now, as to the firſt of theſe Reaſons or Excuſes, I fear, if it plead any Thing, it caſts the Fault over on GOD. Are we to excuſe our ſelves from our Frailty? Well, either we are made ſo frail that we are not able to obey, or we are not; if we are able to obey, then where is the Excuſe, when GOD requires no more of us than what he gave us Power to perform? If we are not able, then how came GOD to ſubject us to *a Law* we were not able to obey? If we have rendred our ſelves unable, is not this our Fault?

As to the Second, " *That we do not Sin out of Contempt of the Deity,* " *but for our own Advantage.* I anſwer, 1. The Principle the Sinner goes on, according to this Apology made for him, *viz. That the Thing he does, tho' it croſſes the Law of God, yet makes for his own Advantage,*

is highly injurious to and blasphemous against GOD: For it supposes that GOD has barr'd Man from what contributes to his Happiness, and supposes that more Advantage is to be had by Disobedience, which is a high Aggravation of the Fault. 2. I will not grant him, that there is no Opposition in the Heart to GOD. What tho' there be not plain, declar'd, direct and open Hostility; yet there is an Alienation of Affection, Aversion from Converse with, and a Neglect of GOD to be found with all in more or less, of which their Actions are a sufficient Proof.

As to the Third, *That an Offence, tho' against an infinite GOD, is lessen'd by the Consideration of the Sinner's being finite.* I answer, 1 This Excuse pleads for all Sin alike: For let the Sinner sin never so deeply, yet he is *finite* still. 2. If this be well consider'd, it's perfectly ridiculous: For the Measure of Sin, its Greatness is not to be taken this Way, but the contrary: For provided the Object against whom its committed, is *Infinite*, the meaner the Person be that commits it, the greater still is the Fault.

But in very Deed, all these Attempts to extenuate *Sin*, as they are useless to Sinners, who are not to be judged by Man, but GOD, and not to be dealt with according to the Estimate he makes, but that which GOD makes of *Sin*; so likewise they smell rank of the Want of a due Regard for the Honour of the *Deity*, and are of the worst Consequence to the World, since they tend to encourage Sin, open a Door to Impiety, and embolden Sinners to go on in Courses they too much incline to. Besides, such Excuses for *Sin* do but ill become Persons who make such an horrible Out-cry against the *Doctrine of Satisfaction* upon all Occasions, as having a Tendency to make *Forgiveness* cheap in Sinners Eyes, and to imbolden Men to Sin without Fear. May not the Charge be here retorted? Who gives the greatest Encouragement to Sin, he that asserts the *Necessity of a Satisfaction*, or he who *extenuates Sin* to that Degree as to encourage the Sinner to hope he may get off without a Satisfaction? I shall, to what has been said, subjoin a few Words from a late Discourse, if the Quotation seem long, the Excellency of it will easily excuse it; besides, that it is so full to the Purpose, and leads so directly to that which is the Design of what hitherto has been said. " Furthermore, it is to

Dr. How *Living Temple, Part* 2. *Pag.* 237, 238, 239.

" be considered, That the *Rights* of the *divine Government*; the *Quality* and *Measure* " of *Offences* committed against it; and *when*,

" or

" or upon *what Terms* they may be remitted; or in *what Caſe* it may " be congruous to the Dignity of that Government, to recede from " *ſuch Rights*, are Matters of ſo high a Nature, that it becomes us to " be very ſparing in making any Eſtimate about them, eſpecially a " diminiſhing one.—— Even *among Men*, how ſacred Things are *Ma-* " *jeſty* and the *Rights of Government?* And how much above the " Reach of a vulgar Judgment? Suppoſe a Company of *Peaſants*, that " underſtand little more than what is within the Compaſs of their " *Mattock*, *Plough* and *Shovel*, ſhould take upon them to judge of the " *Rights of their Prince*, and make an Eſtimate of the *Meaſure* of *Of-* " *fences*, committed againſt the *Majeſty* and *Dignity* of *Government*, " how competent Judges would we think them? And will we not " acknowledge the moſt *refin'd humane Underſtanding* as incompetent " to judge of the *Rights of the divine Government*? Or meaſure the " Injuriouſneſs of the *Offence* done againſt it, as the *meaneſt Peaſant* to " make an Eſtimate of theſe Matters in a *humane Government*? If " only the *Reputation* be wrong'd of a Perſon of a *better Quality*, how " ſtrictly is it inſiſted on, to have the Matter try'd by his *Peers*, or " Perſons of an *equal Rank*, ſuch as are capable of underſtanding " Honour and Reputation! How would it be reſented, that an Affront " put upon a *Nobleman*, ſhould be committed to the Judgment of " *Smiths* and *Coblers*, eſpecially if they were *Participes Criminis*, and as " well *Parties* as *Judges*?

" When the *Regalia* of the great *Ruler* and *Lord* of Heaven and " Earth are *invaded*, his *Temple violated*, his *Preſence deſpis'd*, his Image " *torn down* thence and *defac'd*: Who among the Sons of Men are " either *great*, or *knowing*, or *innocent* enough to judge of the *Offence* " and Wrong? Or how *fit it is*, that it be remitted without Recom- " pence? Or what Recompence would be proportionable? How ſup- " poſable is it, That there may be Congruities *in this Matter*, obvious " to the divine Underſtanding, which infinitely exceed the Meaſure of " ours.

From what has been ſaid, it is eaſy to underſtand the Importance of the Caſe. All Mankind are involv'd in Sin, lie under this dreadful Guilt, and that not in one, but in many Inſtances. Now if they are not ſure that it may be remov'd, and know not in what Way this is to be done; they muſt either not take up the Caſe, or they muſt be under continual Diſquietments, dread the Iſſue, and fear divine Reſent-

ments.

ments. They can never expect any Rewards for Obedience, and consequently they must languish in it, and so all Religion that can be available is lost.

SECT. II.

Shewing the Darkness of Nature's Light as to Pardon.

THE Importance of the Case being thus cleared, we now proceed to demonstrate the *Insufficiency of Nature's Light* to help out of this Strait. And that we may without Fear assert it so, is evident from the ensuing Considerations;

I. *That Light* which fail'd Men so far, as to a Discovery of the *Strait*, is not likely to help them out of it. If we understand not where the Difficulty lies, and how great it is, we are never likely to solve it. Now it is undeniable, that a great Part of the World understood not the *Evil of Sin*, or of how vast a Consequence it was, to be assur'd about the *Pardon* of it. The prevalent Darkness of their Minds about the *Nature*, *Holiness* and *Justice* of the *Deity*; their own *Natures* and *Relation* to him; their *Ignorance* of the *Nature of Sin*; the Commonness of it in the World; their strong Inclinations to it, and other Things of a like Nature, kept them from apprehending the Difficulty of the Case. But above all, the best *Moralists* amongst the *Philosophers*, such as *Socrates* and *Plato* seem'd utterly inconcern'd. And the Reason is plain, their *Pride* blinded them so, that they idoliz'd their own *Vertues*, and made no reck'ning of their *Sins*.

II. They who had a little more Concern about *Sin*, saw somewhat of the Difficulty of this Matter, but found themselves at a Loss what Way to relieve themselves: and therefore they had Recourse, some to *Philosophy*, *Musick* and *Mathematicks*, for the Purgation of their Souls; and others to *Lustrations*, *Sacrifices* and *diverse Washings*, and I do not know what other Fancies, which had no Manner of Foundation in *Reason*, no Suitableness to the *Nature* of the Difficulty, no *divine Warrant*, and therefore were never able to satisfie the Conscience, as to the Sinner's Acceptance with GOD, and the Removal of the Guilt. These being only the Productions of their own Imaginations, notwithstanding of all these, their Fears continu'd, and they remain'd under Appre-

Aprehenſions that even *Death* ſhould not terminate their Miſeries, as *Lucretius* himſelf ſings,

——At Mens ſibi conſcia Facti,
Præmetuens adhibet Stimulos, terretque Flagellis,
Nec videt interea, quì Terminus eſſe Malorum
Poſſit, nec qui ſit Pœnarum denique Finis,
Atque eadem metuit magis hæc in Morte graveſcant.

III. They who either thought ſomewhat deeper of the Caſe, or at leaſt, ſeem'd to do ſo, eſpecially at Times when the Impreſſions they had of *divine Juſtice*, were quickned by ſome *terrible Plagues* or *Judgments*, had Recourſe to Things that were ſo far from relieving, that they really increas'd the Guilt, I mean that abominable Cuſtom of *humane Sacrifices*. This cruel Cuſtom, univerſally almoſt, obtain'd in the World, if we may believe either profane or ſacred Records; of which Dr. *Owen* in his Treatiſe of *vindictive Juſtice*, gives many Inſtances. They not only ſacrificed Men, but even Multitudes of them. The Inſtances of this Kind in the ſacred Records are known. As to others, *Ditmarus* quotted by Dr. *Owen* tells us, "That the *Normans* and "*Danes*, every Year in the Month of *January* "did ſacrifice to their Gods 99 Men, as many "Horſe, Dogs and Cocks. *Clemens Alexandrinus* quotted by the ſame Author, tell us what the Uſage of the Nations in this Matter was, and on what Occaſions. "*Jam vero cum Civitates & Gentes tanquam Peſtes invaſiſſent, ſæva "poſtularunt Libamina*; & Ariſtomenes *quidem* "Meſſenius, Ithometæ Jovi, Trecentos *mactavit*, *ſe tot & tales rite "ſacrificare exiſtimans*, *in quibus etiam* Theompompus *Rex* Lacedæmonum *erat*, *præclara Victima*. *Tauri autem Populi, qui habitabant circa* "Tauricam Cherſoneſum, *quoſcunque Hoſpites apud ſe cœperint*, Dianæ "Tauricæ *eos ſtatim ſacrificant* (inde inhoſpitalia Littora.) *Hæc tua* "*Sacrificia* Euripides *in Scena tragice decantat*. Here are no leſs than three Hundred ſacrificed at once, and among them a King. Here are Strangers ſacrific'd. And any one that will read there, will find how uſual it was to ſacrifice their Children and neareſt Relations. The Cuſtom is barbarous, and fully ſpeaks out the Deſpair of Men awakned to a ſerious Conſideration of *Sin*, and the Darkneſs of *Nature's Light*.

Dr. Owen *de Juſtitia vindicatrice, Cap.* 4. *Page* 69.

Ibid. *Pag.* 76, 77.

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If it could have pointed to any other Thing that could quiet the Conscience, civiliz'd Nations, such as those among whom this Custom did prevail, would never have had Recourse to it.

IV. 'Tis no Wonder that Men should be brought to such Straits; for they wanted the Knowledge of many Things, that were of absolute Necessity to make them once so much as understand what a Case they were in. They knew not, nor, as has been proven, could they know the *Rise of Sin*, and therefore could not know what Estimate to make of it, nor what GOD would make of it. They knew neither the Extent of the *Mercy* nor *Justice* of GOD, without which it was impossible to determine in the Case.

V. The Questions that must be resolv'd before the Mind of a Sinner, that once understands his State, can be satisfied, are so many, so intricate, and so palpably above the Reach of *uninlightned Reason*, that its foolish to pretend that *Nature's Light* will or can satisfy the Mind of any Man in the Case. Men may pretend what they will, who either do not take up the Case, or who are otherwise themselves satisfy'd by *divine Revelation*; but they who seriously, and without Partiality or Prejudice view the Case, will have other Thoughts. Who will give me rational Satisfaction as to those and the like Questions? Whether, considering the *Greatness* of *Sin*, the *Justice*, *Wisdom* and *Holiness* of GOD, and the Honour of his *Government*, it is consistent to pardon *any Sin*? If it be, whether he will pardon all, many or few Sins? What, or what Degrees of Sin he will forgive? Whether he will pardon without any Reparation for the *Honour* of his *Laws* or not? Upon what *Terms* he will do it? If he require Reparation, what *Reparation*, and by *whom* is it to be perform'd? How shall we know that he has *pardoned*? If he pardon, whether will he remit *all Punishment* due to *Sin*, or how much? Whether will he *meerly pardon*, or will he *over* and *above* re-admit the Sinner to *Grace*, and as *intire Favour* as before he sinn'd? Whether will he not only pardon, but *reward* the Sinner's *imperfect Obedience*? Unless all of these are resolv'd, the Difficulty is not loos'd. And who will undertake to resolve them and give *rational Satisfaction* that understands the Case.

VI. These Questions are not only above the Reach of *Man*; but they belong not to him to judge and decide them. The Offence is committed against GOD. He alone understands what the Contempt of his *Authority*, the Disorder brought into *his Government* by *Sin*, and the Disobedience of his Creature amounts unto: What is fit to be done

done in the Caſe, he alone is Judge, at his Tribunal it is to be try'd. Man is too ignorant, too guilty, and too partial in his own Favours to be allow'd to judge. Now where are the Deciſions of GOD in the Caſe to be found? Are they legible in the *Works of Creation*, or *Providence*, or *Conſciences* of Men? In the *Works of Providence* afford innumerable Inſtances of his *Juſtice*, ſome of his *forbearing* Sinners, even while they continue in their Sin, and loading them with outward Effects of his Bounty: But where is the Sinner, of whom we can ſay, *GOD has forgiven him*? Or ſaid that *he will forgive*? The *Conſciences* of Men read them ſometimes *ſad Lectures* of *Juſtice*; but never, if they be not inform'd from *Revelation*, any of *Forgiveneſs*.

VII. All the Pretences that are offer'd for *Relief* in this Caſe, are abſurd, vain and inſignificant. They are all reducible to this one Head, *That GOD is infinitely merciful*; but this gives not the leaſt Relief. For,

1. I ask, Muſt GOD then *of neceſſity* exerciſe *Mercy*, or is the *Egreſs* and *Exerciſe* of *this Mercy* neceſſary? If it is not, but it ſtill remains arbitrary, and in the Pleaſure of GOD whether he will *pardon* or not; then I enquire, Where is the Relief pretended? Does it not all evaniſh? Are we not as much at a Loſs as before, whether he will pardon, or how far, or upon what Terms? If it is neceſſary in its *Egreſs*, then I enquire, How is this reconcileable with the Notion of *Mercy*, that ſeems to reſpect voluntary and undeſerv'd Acts of Favour ſhown to them, to whom GOD was not oblig'd to ſhew any? How is this reconcileable to or conſiſtent with *Juſtice*, which is exercis'd in puniſhing Sinners? By what Arguments can this be made appear? Whence is it that there are ſo many Acts of *Juſtice*, and no Inſtances known to, or knowable by the *Light of Nature*, of GOD's having pardon'd any?

2. *Mercy* is either unlimited in it's *Egreſs* or it is not. If it is limited and cannot be exercis'd, but upon ſuch and ſuch Proviſos as make the Exerciſe of it conſiſtent with GOD's Averſion to Sin, and with the Regard he has for the *Authority* of his *Laws*, the Concern he has for the *Honour* of his *Government*, and his *Juſtice*, *Wiſdom* and *Holineſs*, then we are where we were before: For who can tell whether it be conſiſtent with theſe Things to pardon? In what Caſe and upon what Proviſos: If it is not limited to any ſuch Qualifications, then I deſire to know, how this is reconcileable to his *Nature*? How is

such *Mercy* consistent with any Exercise of *Justice* at all? What Account can be given of the direful Effects of *Justice*, whereof the World is full? By what Means can it be reconcil'd to the *Holiness* of GOD's Nature to pardon impenitent Sinners? What need is there for any to guard against *Sin*, since upon this Supposition, *all Sin shall be forgiven*?

3. Is *infinite Mercy universal* in its Extent? If it is not, then I desire to know, what Sins, what Sinners shall be pardon'd? How shall any know whether his Sins are the Sins that are to be pardon'd? If it is universal in its Extent, and all Sins must be pardon'd; then is there not a Door open'd for *all Sin*? How can this be proven? Why have we no Evidence of this in GOD's providential Dealings? Whence have we so many Evidences of the contrary? If it is said that *Mercy* must in more or less be exercis'd toward all, then I enquire, Who tells so? How far shall it be exercis'd? Will it pardon all or part? Upon what Terms? Will it not only *pardon*, but *remunerate* the Guilty?

4. I enquire who are the proper Objects of *Mercy*? Or what is requisite to constitute the proper Object of it? Amongst Men, the proper Object of that *Mercy*, which belongs to Governours is not *Sin* and *Misery*. To spare and pardon upon this Score only, is a plain Vice in Men especially in Governours. But the Object of *Mercy* is *such Sin* and *Misery*, as is consistent with the Honour and Good of the Governour, Government and the Governed to pardon. Now, if it be thus in this Case, then I see Nothing, but we are where we were, and are plung'd in all our former Difficulties. And why it should not be thus, I see no Reason. For there is no Man who knows what *GOD* is, what *Sin* is, what *Justice* is, that will say it is consistent with the *Honour*, *Justice*, *Wisdom* and *Holiness* of GOD to pardon impenitent Sinners, going on in their Sins. And when they say, That his *Mercy* only requires him to pardon penitent Sinners, then this plainly says, That the *Exercise* of his *Mercy* is confin'd to those who are its proper Objects, that is not to *miserable Sinners*, for the Impenitent are most so; but to those whom he may spare, in a Decorum to his Government and Congruity to his other Perfections. And indeed this is what cannot in Reason be denyed: And when it is granted, then it remains a Question, not yet decided, nor indeed determinable by *Reason*, whether *Repentance alone* is *sufficient* to this Purpose.

5. The Case of *Justice* and *Mercy* are quite different as to their Egress: For Justice has Respect to a *fixed Rule*, an *universal Rule*, and requires that Regard be had to it, in dealing with all that are under

that

that Rule: Whereas *Mercy* only is converſant about particular Inſtances, according to the Wiſdom and Pleaſure of him in whom it reſides.

6. The Infinitneſs of either of theſe Attributes, neither requires nor admits, That there be infinite Numbers of Inſtances of either: but that the Acts of *Juſtice* and *Mercy* be ſuch as becomes the infinite Nature of GOD, when it's proper to exerciſe them, or when the *Wiſdom*, *Holineſs*, *Juſtice* or *Mercy* of GOD requires that they be exerciſed.

But the *Deiſts* object, 1. *That upon Suppoſition that GOD will not pardon Sin, there is no Uſe of his Mercy.* I anſwer, We do not ſay he will not pardon Sin; but we ſay, *Nature's Light* cannot tell whether he will pardon it or not, or what is the Caſe wherein Mercy takes Place. We own its Uſe, but we ſay, *Nature's Light* cannot tell when and how it is proper to exerciſe it. Aikenhead's *Speech.*

Again, 'tis pretended, *That GOD is infinitely merciful, then he muſt as the leaſt of its Operations pardon the greateſt of Sins.* This is plainly deny'd, and we have told *wherefore* above. *Ibid.*

It is further pretended, *That Juſtice has done its Buſineſs, when it has condemn'd the Sinner, and then Mercy brings him off*: But this is groſs Ignorance. It belongs as much to *Juſtice* to take Care its Sentence be execute, as to ſee it paſs. *Ibid.*

Again, its urg'd, *That tho' GOD be infinitely Juſt as well as Merciful, yet his Juſtice is only as inherent, not as extenſive as his Mercy toward us: For we are puniſhed only according to our Deſervings, but Mercy is ſhown us above our Deſervings.* The firſt Part is falſe. The very contrary Aſſertion, *viz.* That *Juſtice* is more extenſive, is true, as has been clear'd above, if we reſpect the Number of Objects. The Proof of it is a plain Sophiſm. For 1. It is not true that *Mercy* beſtows its Effects, which in their Nature are above our Deſervings, to mo Perſons than *Juſtice* gives its Effects, which are according to Deſert. 2. The Effects of *Mercy* are not more above deſerving, than the Effects of Juſtice are according to it. 3. The Effects of *Juſtice* are with infinite Exactneſs proportion'd to Deſervings. And all that can be ſaid is, That the Effects of Mercy are ſuited to the Nature of *in-* A. W. *in his Letter, Oracles of Reaſ.*

finite Mercy, not that they are given to infinite Number of Persons, or infinite Degrees.

Blount *Relig. Laici, Pag.* 69. Herbert *de Relig. Gent. Pag.* 199.

Further, it is pretended, *That GOD with whom we have to do, is a* Father *who will not animadvert severly upon his penitent Son.* I answer, As he is a *Father*, so he is a *righteous Judge*. Further, tho' he be a *Father*, yet he is not such *a Father* as Men are, infirm, liable to Failings, that needs his Children, that may give them Occasion or Temptation to offend, that is of the same Nature with them. And hence no firm Argument can be inferr'd from any Thing that is known in this Matter by the *Light of Nature*. Besides, the meanest Offence against GOD is more Atrocious, than the greatest Offence against one's *natural Father*. For which nevertheless there is no Forgiveness, but Punishment without Mercy, by the Law of Nations and Nature.

Finally, All these are but Generals, that may well raise Suspicions in the Minds of Men; but can never give particular Satisfaction to any one Man, as to his Case, or any one of the particular Difficulties that have been mention'd. They no more satisfy, than those Notions that generally prevail'd, of the *Placability* of the Deity, which had their *Rise* at first from *Revelation*, were continu'd by the Necessity of Sinners, who having Challenges for Sin, behoov'd to take Sanctuary some where, and handed down by *Tradition*: But being general, and leaving Men at a Loss about the Means of attoning the Deity, were really of no Use, if not to keep Men from running into downright Despair, and keep them up in an Attendance upon somewhat that look'd like *Religion*; but wherein the Minds of such as really understood any Thing of the Case, could never find Satisfaction.

There is only one Thing that seems of any Moment, that is objected to all this; and that is, That *Nature's Light* which discovers the Sore, discovers a Salve for it, to wit, *Repentance*. To this we shall answer in the following Section, that's peculiarly design'd to consider this.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Wherein its enquir'd whether Repentance is ſufficient to attone for Sin, how far Nature's Light enables to it, what Aſſurance Nature's Light gives of Pardon upon Repentance.

IT now remains that we conſider the only Exception, which is of Moment, and that is, *That Repentance is a ſufficient Attonement*, that *Nature's Light* diſcovers this, and ſo we are not left without *Relief*. This is the more conſiderable that ſeveral *Chriſtians*, yea *Divines* of great Note, and ſome of them deſervedly of high Eſteem, have ſeen meet, in Compliance with their ſeveral Hypotheſes in *Divinity*, to drop Aſſertions that ſeem to favour this. We ſhall firſt propoſe their Opinions, who aſſert this, and then conſider it.

The *Deiſts* go all this Way as one Man. I ſhall offer one for all, and it is *Charles Blount*, who not only ſpeaks the Senſe, but tranſlates the very Words of the learn'd Lord *Herbert*. He tells us then, " That Repentance is the only *Religio Laici*, " known and publick Means, which on our Part P. 68. 69, 70. " is required for ſatisfying the Divine Juſtice, " and returning to the right Way of ſerving GOD. And for clearing " this, he premits to it theſe enſuing Conſiderations, 1. That he that " judgeth Man is his *Father*, and doth look on him as a frail Creature, " obnoxious to Sin. 2. That he generally finds Men Sin, rather out " of Frailty, than out of any Deſire to offend his Divine Majeſty. " 3. That if Man had been made inwardly prone to Sin, and yet " deſtitute of all inward Means to return to him again, he had been " not only remedileſs in himſelf, but more miſerable, than it could be " ſuppos'd an *infinite Goodneſs* did at firſt create, and doth ſtill per- " petuate humane Kind. 4. That Man can do no more on his Part, " for the ſatisfying of *Divine Juſtice*, than to be heartily ſorry and " repent him of his Sins, as well as to endeavour, through his Grace, " to return to the right Way, from which through his Tranſgreſſion, " he had err'd: Or if this did not ſuffice for the making of his Peace, " that the ſupreme GOD, by inflicting ſome temporal Puniſhment in

" this

" this Life, might satisfy his own Justice. 5. That if temporal " Punishment in this Life, were too little for the Sin committed, he " might yet inflict a greater Punishment hereafter in the other Life, " without giving eternal Damnation to those, who (if not for the " Love of *Goodness*) yet, at least, upon Sense of Punishment, would " not sin eternally. Notwithstanding, since these Things may again " be controverted, I shall insist only upon that " universally acknowledg'd Proposition first laid " down. This Proposition with the Explications he translates from *Herbert*, only has made some small Additions.

Herbert *de Relig. Gentil.* P. 199.

It is no wonder to see those speak so; but it is a little more odd to hear *Christians* talk so. One who would seem very zealous for Christianity tells us, " That the GOD of Patience " and Consolation, who is rich in Mercy, would " forgive his frail Off-spring, if they acknow- " ledge their Faults, disapproved the Iniquity " of their Trasgressions, beg'd his Pardon, and " resolv'd in earnest to conform their Actions to this Rule, which they " own'd to be just and right: This Way of Reconciliation, this Hope " of Attonement, the *Light of Nature* reveal'd to them.—— He that " made Use of this Candle of the LORD, (*viz.* Reason) so far as to find " his Duty, could not miss to find also the Way to Reconciliation and " Forgiveness, when he had fail'd of his Duty. Much more speaks he to the same Purpose.

Lock's *Reasonableness of Christianity*, P. 255, 256.

But it is stranger to hear *Divines* speak so. And yet we find one telling us, " That the same Light of Nature, " which declares to us our Duty, dictates to us, " when we have fail'd in that Duty, to repent " and turn to GOD with trusting to his Mercy " and Pardon, if we do so and not else. We do " find it legible in our Hearts, that GOD is good and wisely gracious " to pity our Infirmities, to consider our lost Estate, and necessary " Frailty, as that there is a GOD, and any Worship that is at all due " to him.

Mr. Humfrey's *Peaceable Disquisitions*, Chap. 14. P. 57.

To the same Purpose the learn'd *Baxter* speaks in his *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, Part 1. Chap. 17. Dr. *Whichcot* in his Sermon *Acts* 13. 38. and others too large to quote.

But

But now, with all due Deference to thoſe great Names, I ſhall take Leave to offer the following Remarks, wherein I ſhall clear my own Mind, and offer the Reaſons on which I diſſent from them.

I. I obſerve that the *Deiſts* ſpeak more uncertainly about this Matter; whereas theſe *Chriſtian Writers* ſeem more poſitive. The *Deiſts* ſeem not to want their Fears that *Repentance* may not ſerve the Turn, and therefore they ſeem willing to admit of *temporal Puniſhments*, and even *Puniſhments after Time*, only they have not will to think of *eternal Puniſhments*; as we heard from *Herbert* and *Blount*, who both ſpeak in the ſame Words on this Head. But the *Chriſtian Writers* are poſitive. And I am jealous the Reaſon is not, that they ſaw farther into the *Light of Nature*, than the *Deiſts*; but that they lean more firmly to the *Scripture Revelation*, which aſſures us *that penitent Sinners ſhall be forgiven*. Tho' I muſt add, the Scripture no where ſays that penitent Sinners ſhall be forgiven upon their *Penitence*, as that, *which is ſufficient to attone the Juſtice of GOD*. And to ſpeak plainly, however confident thoſe worthy Perſons are, that they have read this Doctrine in the *Book of Nature*, I dare be bold to affirm that they had either fail'd in the Diſcovery, or ſtammer'd a little more in reading their Leſſon, if they had not learn'd it before Hand out of the *Book of the Scriptures*; tho' the Thing ſeems, when they have read it there, to approve it ſelf ſo much to *Reaſon*, that *Reaſon* cannot but aſſent to it. It is well obſerv'd by one of thoſe Authors, with whom we now manage this Debate, "That when "Truths are once known to us, tho' by *Tradition*, "we are apt to be favourable to our own Parts, "and aſcribe to our own Underſtanding the "Diſcovery of what, in Truth we borrowed from others; or, at leaſt, "finding we can prove, what at firſt we learn'd from others, we are "forward to conclude it an obvious Truth, which, if we had ſought, "we could not have miſs'd. Nothing ſeems hard to our Underſtandings, "that is once known; and becauſe what we ſee with our own Eyes, "we are apt to overlook or forget the Help we had from others, who "firſt ſhew'd and pointed it out to us, as if we were not at all beholden "to them for that Knowledge; for Knowledge being only of known "Truths; we conclude our Faculties would have led us into it with-"out any Aſſiſtance; and that we know theſe Truths by the Strength "and native Light of our own Minds, as they did, from whom we "receiv'd them by theirs, only they had the Luck to be before us.

Lock *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, P. 279, 280, 281.

"Thus

" Thus the whole Stock of humane Knowledge is claim'd by every " one, as his private Poſſeſſion, aſſoon as he (profiting by others " Diſcoveries) has got it into his own Mind ; and ſo it is : But not " properly by his own ſingle Induſtry, nor of his own Acquiſition. " He ſtudies, it's true, and takes Pains to make a Progreſs in what " others have delivered, but their Pains were of another Sort, who " firſt brought thoſe Truths to Light, which he afterwards derives " from them. He that travels the Roads now, applauds his own " Strength and Legs, that have carry'd him ſo far, in ſuch a ſcantling " of Time, and aſcribes all to his own Vigour, little conſidering how " much he owes to their Pains, who clear'd the Woods, drain'd the " Bogs, built the Bridges, and made the Ways paſſable ; without " which he might have toil'd much with little Progreſs. A great " many Things which we have been bred in the Belief of from our " Cradles, (and are Notions grown familiar, and as it were natural to " us under the Goſpel) we take for unqueſtionable obvious Truths, " and eaſily demonſtrable, without conſidering how long we might " have been in Doubt, or Ignorance of them, had *Revelation* been " ſilent. 'Tis no diminiſhing to *Revelation*, that *Reaſon* gives its " Suffrage too to the Truths *Revelation* hath diſcover'd. But 'tis our " Miſtake to think that becauſe *Reaſon* confirms them to us, we " had the firſt certain Knowledge of them from thence, and in that " clear Evidence we now poſſeſs them. How applicable this excellent Diſcourſe is to the Caſe in Hand, will appear from what we deſign to ſubjoin on this Head. Tho' after all, that which the *Scripture* delivers, and *Reaſon* confirms in this Caſe, is not, *That Repentance is ſufficient to attone the Juſtice of GOD, or that GOD will pardon a penitent Sinner, meerly on Account of his Penitence*, which the *Deiſts* Caſe requires. The *Scriptures* plainly teach the contrary, and thoſe learn'd Perſons, or ſome of them at leaſt who own them, believe according to the *Scriptures*, the contrary, which makes a conſiderable Difference betwixt them and the *Deiſts* ; tho' in this Caſe, they ſeem to ſpeak the ſame Things. But that which *Scripture* aſſerts, is, *That Penitence is a Qualification ſuitable to a Sinner to be pardoned, and that it's not ſuitable to the Wiſdom and Juſtice of GOD to pardon one, who is not ſorry for former Offences, and reſolves to obey for the future.* Reaſon confirms *this* indeed, but 'tis not to the Purpoſe.

II. But to come a little more cloſs to the Purpoſe ; *This Repentance*, which is pretended *ſufficient*, conſiſts of two Parts, *Sorrow for the Offence*,

Offence, and *a Return to Obedience*. This laſt Part, *a Return to Obedience*, what is it? Nothing, but only a Performance of the Duties we were antecedently bound unto by the *Law of Creation*, which only receives a new Denomination from it's Relation to an *antecedent Deviation*, or *Sin*. This Denomination adds no new Worth to it, nor does the Relation whereon its founded. Wherefore we can never reaſonably ſuppoſe, that there is any great Matter in this, that can attone for the Tranſgreſſion. It's well if it obtains Approbation as a Part of our Duty. But no reaſonable Man can pretend that it attones for any Part of our Sin.

III. Tho' *Nature's Light* diſcovers our Obligation to that Duty, which now, becauſe Sin preceeded, muſt be call'd a *Return*; yet it is a Queſtion, if *Nature's Light* is able to bring a Sinner, that has once gone away, to ſuch a *Return* as is neceſſary. For 1. We have above prov'd that *Nature's Light* is defective as to Motives to *Obedience*, as to the Diſcovery of particular Duties, and much more is it defective as to Motives to a *Return*: Becauſe there is more requir'd to encourage a Sinner to come back, who has once offended, than to engage him to continue. There is a Diſcouragement ariſing from Fear of Puniſhment, and falling ſhort of any Reward he might have expected upon the Account of his Sin to be removed, and that is not eaſily done, as ſhall be ſhown. 2. Beſides, not only Diſcouragements ly in the Way of a *Return*, but croſs Inclinations, Averſations from Duty, and Inclinations to Sin. Now I am not ſatisfy'd that *Nature's Light* can remove, or direct how to remove theſe; of which we may ſpeak more fully in the next Chapter. So that as for this Part of *Repentance*, we neither ſee of what Uſe it is as to Attonement, nor do we find it clear that *Nature's Light* can bring any to it.

IV. The Streſs of the Buſineſs then muſt lean on this *Sorrow* for bygone Tranſgreſſions, that is the other Part of the Compoſition. But here I am ſure it will be readily granted, that every Sort of *Sorrow* for Sin will not ſerve. If one is only griev'd for the Loſs he has ſuſtain'd, the Hazard he has run himſelf into, and the Evil he has to ſuffer, or Fears, at leaſt, for his Offence; this can be available to no Man. Wherefore tho' *Nature's Light* may bring a Man to this and has oft done it, yet this ſignifies nothing in the Caſe.

V. The *Sorrow*, that only can be pretended, is that which ariſes *purely*, or at leaſt, *principally* from Concern for the *Diſhonour done to GOD*. Now as to this *Sorrow*, it is to be obſerved, That it is not any

Action of ours done in Obedience to any Command: But it is a *Passion, in its own Nature uneasy*, as all Sorrow is, tho' suitable to a Sinner, and, upon the Supposition, that he is so, useful perhaps. And it results from the joint Influence of prevailing Love to GOD, his Law and Authority, and a clear Conviction of Sin's having injur'd his Honour, and our being, on this Account, obnoxious.

VI. It is not easily to be granted that *Nature's Light* can bring any Man to *this Sorrow*. Since 1. It is evident that the Temper Men are naturally of, is quite contrary to that which gives Rise to such a *Sorrow*. We are naturally averse from GOD, as shall be made appear afterwards, and are not under the Influence of any such prevalent Love to him, and it's not easy to prove that *Nature's Light* is able to remove this *natural Aversion of the Heart* from GOD: But of this more in the next Chapter. 2. GOD can never appear amiable to a Sinner, if he is not reveal'd as one ready to forgive. We cannot be sorrowful for our Sin, if we are not seriously convinc'd that we have sinn'd, and see the Demerit of Sin. If we are convinc'd that we have sinn'd, and deserve Punishment, we cannot have prevalent Love to GOD, which is requisite to give Life to this Sorrow, make it run in the right Channel, and proceed on those Accounts, which will make it acceptable to GOD, or available to us, unless he appear to us as ready to forgive, which *Nature's Light* doth not discover.

VII. I doubt if *Nature's Light calls* us to *Repentance*. I allow that there are several things obvious to *Nature's Light*, which may be said to drive us to *Repentance*, because they serve to discover to us these Things whereon *this Sorrow* follows, bind the Obligation on us to that Duty, which because of the preceeding Sin, is called a *Return*, and serve as Arguments to enforce a Compliance, provided we had a *Call* or Invitation to return, I mean a *New Call*. For clearing this, we are to observe that, Were Man innocent and guilty of no Fault, and had his Obedience no Imperfection necessarly cleaving to it, and were he under no such Inconveniency as might make him dread Wrath, or fear his Obedience might be rejected; in that Case a Discovery of the Obligation he lies under to Duty, were a *Call* and *Invitation sufficient* as securing him, at least as to the Acceptance of his Duty. But where there are those Things in his Case, *Sin* and *Imperfection* cleaving to the Duty, and the Performer chargeable with *Guilt* on both those Accounts, in Order to engage him to Duty, there is requisite a *New Call* or *Invitation*, securing him against those Grounds of Fear, and giving him Ground

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to expect Acceptance. Now it is ſuch a *Call* as this, that only can bring the Sinner to Repentance. And this we deny that *Nature's Light* gives; tho' we owne that it diſcovers many Things, that may be ſaid in ſome Senſe, to lead to *Repentance*: Becauſe, upon Suppoſition of ſuch an Invitation, they are improveable as Arguments to enforce Compliance with Duty. Thus, If GOD invite me back again, his *Goodneſs* diſcover'd in the *Works of Creation* and *Providence*, invites to go to him, and all the direful Evidences of his Anger againſt Sinners perſwade the ſame Thing: And therefore may be ſaid to *lead*, or rather *drive* to *Repentance*; becauſe they have a Tendency that Way in their own Nature, and are capable of ſuch an Improvement: But ſtill it's only upon the foregoing Suppoſition.

VIII. To make this Matter yet a little more clear, I grant that *the Light of Nature* diſcovers ſinful Man to be ſtill under an Obligation to obey GOD. As long as GOD is GOD, and Man his Creature, Man is under a Ty to Subjection, and GOD has a Right to Man's Obedience. This Obedience to which Man is bound, after once he has ſinn'd, muſt be call'd a *Return*. Further, the *Light of Nature* teaches, That if Man had yielded perfect Obedience, he ſhould not have done it in vain. Acceptance, at leaſt, he ſhould have had, and what other *Reward* the *Goodneſs* of GOD thought meet. And that Man ſuſtains a great Loſs by *Sin*, that interveens betwixt him and his Expectations from the *Goodneſs* of GOD, and beſides, expoſes him to the Hazard of his juſt Reſentments, which, if it is ſeen, as by *Nature's Light* in ſome Meaſure, it may be, will occaſion *Sorrow*. Further *Nature's Light* will teach that the more deeply we *Sin*, the more we have to fear, and therefore out of *Fear* and a *Regard* to our own Intereſt and Expectation of being freed from thoſe ſeverer Judgments, which a Progreſs in Sin draw on Men, may be induc'd to *return*. Now all this *Nature's Light* diſcovers, but neither is this *Sorrow*, which ſavours of ſome Regard to our ſelves, but of little or none to GOD; nor *this Return*, which is not that chearful, cordial Obedience that GOD requires and accepts, of any Avail in the Caſe. No Man, that knows what he ſays, will pretend, that ſuch a *Sorrow* or ſuch a *Return* is *ſufficient* to attone the *Juſtice* of GOD for bygones, or even obtain *Acceptance* for it ſelf, which has ſo much of Love to Self, and ſo little of that which reſpects GOD.

IX. But *the Repentance* that is available in this Caſe is a *Sorrow*, flowing from *prevalent Love to GOD*, and grieving, if not *only*, yet

principally for the *Wrong done to GOD*, and a chearful following of Duty upon Prospect of GOD's being a *Rewarder* of it. Now to *call* or to make up a *sufficient Invitation* to a Sinner, to such a *Repentance*, it's requisite that GOD 1. be represented in such a Way, as a Sinner that sees himself guilty, can love him, delight in him, and draw near to him. But this he can never be, if he is not represented as *One with whom certainly there is Forgiveness*. 2. It requires further, that GOD be represented as One, who will accept of Sinners *Obedience*, notwithstanding of their Desert of *Wrath* for former *Disobedience*, and this requires still that he be a GOD that forgives. 3. Further, it's requisite, that he be represented as One, that will accept of *Obedience*, not only from one that has *sinn'd*, but that implies *Sin* and *Imperfection* in it. Now this cannot be, if he is not known to be one that is *plenteous in Mercy and will abundantly pardon*. Now I say the *Light of Nature* gives no such Discovery of GOD: And therefore gives no *Call* or *sufficient Invitation* to *this Repentance*.

X. Nor will it help out here, to say, That *the Light of Nature* doth represent GOD as *placable*, *one who may be pacify'd*: For, should I grant that it does so, yet this cannot invite to such an *Obedience*, so long as 1. It's left a Question, Whether he be actually reconcil'd, or positively determin'd to forgive? 2. Especially considering, that he has not pointed to, and positively declar'd on what Terms he will be appeas'd. Yea 3. Since moreover he has given no visible Instance, knowable by the *Light of Nature*, that he *has forgiven* any particular Person. But 4. On the contrary, the World is full of the most terrible Effects of his Displeasure, and these falling most heavily on the Best, even those who go fartheſt in a Compliance with Duty. In a Word, these dark Notions of a *placable GOD*, which yet is the utmost that *unenlightned Reason* can pretend to, are utterly insufficient to bring any of the Children of Men to *that Repentance* we are now in Quest of; 'tis so sunk, and as it were quite obscur'd by cross Appearances. And all that can reasonably be said, is, That in the Providence of GOD there is such a seeming Contrariety of *Good* and *Evil*, that Men know not what to make of it, but are toss'd by contrary Appearances. And of this we have a fair Acknowledgment by one, who, besides that he was a Person of great Learning, was not only a great Stickler for the natural Discoveries of this *Placability*, but one of the first Broachers of it, being led to it by the peculiar Hypotheses he maintain'd and advanc'd in Divinity, I mean the learn'd *Amyrald*. After he has assert-

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ed the *natural Diſcoveries* of this *Placability*, and alledg'd that they lead to *Repentance*, yet ſubjoins, "But there are
" (ſays he) Motions in the corrupt Nature of Man which fruſtrate the Effect, if GOD did not provide for it in another Manner (that is by Revelation.) For Man flees from the Preſence of GOD through Fear of Puniſhment, and cannot hinder the Prevalence of it in his Soul; ſo that as a Man affrighted beholds Nothing ſtedfaſtly, but always imagines new Occaſions of Terror, and repreſents hideous Phantaſms to himſelf; ſo we are not able to allow our ſelves Leaſure to conſider attentively this Diſpenſation of the Goodneſs of GOD towards the Wicked, nor thereby to aſſure our ſelves of obtaining Mercy and Pardon. As a lewd Wretch, whoſe Conſcience bears him Witneſs of many hanious Crimes, tho' he ſhould perceive ſome Connivance in the Magiſtrate for a Time, and his Judge ſhew him ſome good Countenance, cannot but be diſtruſtful of him, and ſuſpect that he does but defer his Puniſhment to another Time, and aſſuredly reſerve it for him; eſpecially if he hath an Opinion that the Magiſtrate is not ſuch an one as himſelf, but abhors the Wickedneſſes committed by him. Now we are univerſally thus principled, That as we have thoſe whom we fear, ſo we never bear good Will toward them of whom we have ſome Diffidence. And the Diſtruſting the good Will of any one being a Step to Fear, is likewiſe, by the ſame Reaſon, a Degree to Hatred; unleſs the Diſtruſt proceed to ſuch a Meaſure as to be an abſolute Fear; for then the Coldneſs of Affection is turned into perfect Hatred. Wherefore Man thus diſtruſting the good Will of GOD towards him, conſequently can have but a very ſlight Affection to him; yea, he will even become his Enemy, in as much as the Diſtruſt in this Caſe will be extremely great. Thus far he. Now methinks this quite overthrows the *Placability* he had before aſſerted, diſcoverable by *Nature's Light*, at leaſt, as to any Uſe it can be ſuppos'd of, for aſſuring Sinners of *Pardon*, or inviting them to *Repentance*.

Amyrald *of Religions, Part 2. Chap. 17. P. mihi*, 253, 254.

XI. But to go a Step further, I cannot ſee that the *Light of Nature* is able to give us any *Aſſurance* of this *Placability*. Where is it in the *Book of Nature* that we may read this Truth *that God is placable*? Is it in the *Works of Creation*? No, this is not pretended. Nor can it be, they were all abſolv'd and finiſh'd before the Entrance of *Sin*, and cannot be ſuppos'd to carry on them any Impreſſions of *Placability* to Sinners

Sinners: Is it in the *Works of Providence*? Yes, here it is pretended. And what is it in the *Works of Providence* that is alledg'd to evince this *Placability*? Is it that GOD spares Sinners for some Time, and not only so, but bestows many outward good Things on them, whom he spares? Yes, this is that whereon the whole Stress of the Business is laid. But I cannot see the Force of this to assure us that GOD is *placable*. For 1. It is certain that the Nature of the Things do not infer certainly any such Thing. *Forbearance is not Forgiveness*: Nor does it intimate any Design to forgive. It may be exercis'd, where there is a certain Design and fix'd Purpose of Punishing. And what Relation have a few of those outward Things, whereby *Love or Hatred cannot be known*, unto *Peace* and *Reconciliation* with GOD? It is, I know, pretended, That even *this Forbearance* is a *Sort* of *Forgiveness*, and that all the World sharing in it, are in some Sort forgiven. So Mr: *Baxter* says. If this learn'd Person or any other have a Mind to extend the Notion of Pardon so far as to include even *Reprives* under that Name, we cannot hinder: But it is certain, That no Abatement of the Punishment, far less the Dissolution of the Obligation, which is that ordinarly meant by Pardon, do necessarily follow upon, or is included in a Delay of Punishment. The Slowness in Execution, which may proceed upon many Grounds, hid in Depth of divine Wisdom from us, may be more than compensate by its Severity when it comes. *Leaden Feet*, as some have us'd the Expression, *may be compensate by Iron Hands*. And when Men have seriously weighed outward good Things, which are thrown in greatest Plenty in the Lap of the most Wicked, are full of Vanity and commonly insnare. They can see but very little of any Mercy design'd them thereby. And if any Inference toward a *Placability* is deducible, which yet I profess I cannot see, I am sure that it is far above the Reach of not a few, if not most of Mankind, to make the Deduction and trace the Argument. And so it can be of no Use to them. 2. All those Things are consistent with a Sentence standing unrepeal'd and never to be repeal'd, if either *Scripture*, which tells us that *GOD exercises much Long-suffering*, and gives Plenty of good Things to *the Vessels of Wrath*; or *Reason*, which assures us that Persons continuing obstinate to the last in Sin, cannot evite Judgment, may be believ'd. 3. As there is Nothing in the Nature of the Things that can ascertain us of GOD's *Placability*, much less is there any in the Condition of the Persons, to whom this Dispensation is exercis'd. Were these bestow'd on the *most Vertuous*, or were there

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an Increase of them, as Persons proceeded in *Vertue*, and came nearer and nearer to *Repentance*; or were there on the other Hand a continu'd Evidence of *Wrath* and *Implacability* towards obstinate Sinners, this then would seem to say somewhat. But all Things are quite contrary, the Worst have the most of them, and the Best have commonly least of them. What will the Sinner say, that GOD is inviting me by his *Goodness* to *Vertue*? No, if I should turn Vertuous I might rather expect to be worse dealt with. That is a bootless Way for any Thing I can see in it. Does not Scripture and Experience tell us, That thus Things go, and that such Use Sinners have made of this Dispensation? And so dark is it, that even they, who had GOD's Mind in the Word to unriddle the Mystery, have been shaken at it so far, that they have been upon the very Brink of Apostasy, while they saw the Way of Sinners prosper, and that they *who hate GOD were exalted.* How then can *unenlightned Reason* draw such Inferences as these learn'd Men pretend? Albeit I have a great Veneration for these learn'd Men; yet if it would not appear presumptuous, in one so far below in all Respects, to censure his Superiors, I would take the Liberty to say, That in this Matter they are guilty of a double Mistake; *First*, In that they measure Men's Abilities by a wrong Standard. What such Men as they may trace by *Reason*, many Men are under not only a *moral*, but even a *natural Incapacity* to discover. Its certain, besides that vast Difference which is in the Capacities of Men, from different Education and Circumstances, whence its *moraly Impossible* for one who wants that Education, other Occasions and Advantages which another has, to go that same Length and trace these Discoveries, which the other who had Education and Occasion may do; there is likewise vast Difference even in the *natural Abilities* of Men (whether that arises from their *Bodies* or *Souls* I dispute not now, nor is it to the Purpose; for if from either, it is still *natural*) so that one has not a *natural Capacity* to trace the Truths that others may, who have better *natural Abilities*: And so it's naturally Impossible for the Former to make the Discoveries which the other may. And I fear not to add, That if any such Inferences may be drawn from these Premisses, as those learn'd Persons pretend, yet many are under a *natural Impossibility*; and the most under *insuperable moral Incapacity* of tracing those Discoveries. And if it be allow'd that any Man, without his own Fault, is under an Incapacity of making such Deductions, about the *Placability* of GOD, from these Dispensations of Providence, which I think cannot modestly be deny'd,

deny'd, the whole Plea about *Placability* will prove no only unserviceable to the *Deists*, but, if I mistake it not, unmeet to maintain that Station for which it is design'd, in the Hypotheses of the learn'd Asserters of this Opinion. Another Mistake I think those Persons guilty of, is, That Men whose Minds are not inlightned by *Revelation*, may possibly trace those Discoveries, which they who are guided by it may read in the *Book of Nature*. 4. I add, if these Things, whereon they insist, as Discoveries of this *Placability* in GOD, serve to raise any *Suspicions* of that Sort in the Minds of Men, and this is the most that can be reasonably pretended, for Demonstration they do not amount unto, they are quite sunk by the contrary Evidences of GOD's Severity; which must have so much of more Force, in as much as they most commonly befall the *most Vertuous*, which hightens the Suspicion. And besides, as we heard *Amyrald* observe, The Minds of Sinners, who are convinc'd in any Measure of Sin, who are yet the only Persons that will think themselves concern'd in this Matter, are much more inclin'd to entertain *Suspicions* than *good Thoughts* of him, whom they have offended, and who, as their Consciences assure them, hates their Offences. 5. That which puts the Copestone upon our Misery, and concludes us under Darkness, is that *Nature's Light* has no Help to guide us over these Difficulties laid in our Way, from any known Instances of any Persons led to *Repentance* by these Means, or pardon'd on their *Repentance*. So that upon the Whole, I cannot see sufficient Evidence of this *Placability* in the *Light of Nature*.

XII. If it is alledg'd here, That if GOD had *no Design of Mercy* in sparing the World, it's perfectly unintelligible where he did it. In Answer to this, It's to be observ'd, That we do not say that GOD had *no Design of Mercy* in sparing the World, but that this his *Forbearance* of the World is not a sufficient Proof and Evidence of this Design; and that *Nature's Light* can give no satisfying Account of the Reason of this Dispensation of GOD. So dark was this to such as had no other Light, but that of *Reason*, that the most Part laid aside Thoughts of it as a Thing above their Reach; and the more thoughtful knew not what Judgment to make, but were confounded and perplex'd in their Thoughts. They understood not what Account was to be made of GOD's producing so many successive Generations of Men, and tossing them betwixt *Love* and *Hatred*, *Hope* and *Fear* by such a strange Mixture of *Good* and *Evil*; Effects of his *Bounty* and Evidences of his *Anger*. Yea so far were they confounded, that some of them came the

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Length to ſet *GOD aſide from the Government of the World.* This Way the *Epicureans* went, ſome of them accus'd him of *Impotency.* No leſs a Perſon, than *Seneca* introduces GOD, telling good Men, *That he could not help their Calamities.* And *Pliny* accuſes GOD, under the Notion of *Nature*, of no good Deſign, " *Naturam, quaſi magna & ſæva* " *Mercede contra tanta ſua Munera uſam; ita ut non ſatis ſit æſtimare,* " *Parens melior Homini, an triſtior Noverca fuerit; id eſt, Nature* has ſo " cruelly counterballanced its largeſt *Gifts* with horrible *Evils*, that " it's hard to ſay, whether it is not a ſad or cruel *Step-mother* rather than a kindly *Parent* to Man. So that in Fact, Men were thus *ſpared* and *left* in this dark Condition, as to the *Reaſons* of *GOD's Diſpenſation*, is evident from *Experience.* The Reaſons of this Conduct are to be ſought in the Depth of the *Wiſdom* and *ſoveraign Juſtice* of GOD. *Chriſtians* who are found in *the Faith* will own, That all who belong'd to the Election of Grace could not have come into *Being*, if the World had not been thus ſpar'd. They will own, That the World could not have been preſerv'd in any Order, without theſe Effects both of *Bounty* and *Severity*, whereby ſome Reſtraint was put on the Luſts of Men, and ſome Government kept up among them, and they were kept from running to ſuch a Height in Sin, as would have made it impoſſible for GOD, with any Conſiſtency to his *Juſtice*, *Holineſs* or *Wiſdom* to have preſerved the World, till his Deſign in its Preſervation was reach'd. And it may be ſaid further, for the Satisfaction of *Chriſtians* (for the *Deiſts* have no Concern in this Account, which is bottom'd on the *Revelation* they deny) That if GOD had ſeen meet to make all that belong'd to *Adam*'s Covenant at once, they could not have refus'd to conſent to the placing their *Happineſs* on that Bottom whereon he plac'd it in the Tranſaction with *Adam*, and could not have condemn'd GOD for executing the Sentence upon all immediately upon the Breach of it. And therefore I think they have no Reaſon to quarrel GOD's keeping them out of Hell for a while. Further, GOD in his *Wiſdom*, by leaving ſo many Men in this dark Caſe for ſo many Ages, has let them ſee the Shortneſs of their *Wiſdom* to diſentangle them from that *Miſery*, whereunto by Sin they were involv'd. It was *in the Wiſdom of GOD*, that *the World by Wiſdom knew not GOD. Finally*, This ſhould make us welcome *the Goſpel*, which only can diſpel the Darkneſs we are under, as to the whole State of Matters betwixt GOD and us, and lead us to *Life* and *Immortality* and *Mercy*, *pardoning Mercy*, which the *dim Light of Nature* could never diſcover to us.

Now if we consider what has been above discours'd, it will be found that we have made considerable Advances toward Decision of that which is in Debate.

We have clear'd what *that Repentance* is, which with any Shew of Reason can be pretended available in the present Case.

We have evinc'd that the *Placability* of GOD, of which some talk, were it discoverable by *Nature's Light*, is not *sufficient* to bring Men to *this Repentance*.

Further, We have made it appear, That the Evidences of *this Placability* brought from *Nature's Light* are not concludent.

But were all this given up, which we see no Cause to do, the principal Point is still behind, *viz. Whether Nature's Light can ascertain us that all penitent Sinners shall be pardon'd upon their Repentance.* This the *Deists* maintain, and *we* deny. Their Assertion, *That the Light of Nature assures us that penitent Sinners upon their Repentance shall assuredly be forgiven*, is that which we shall next take under Consideration, and demonstrate to be groundless, false and absurd by the ensuing Arguments.

I. I reason against it from *the Nature of Pardon. Forgiveness* or *Pardon* is a *free Act of GOD's Will.* It is a freeing of the Sinner from the Obligation he lies under to Punishment, by Virtue of the penal Sanction of that righteous and just Law which he has violate. All divine Laws are unquestionably equal, just, and righteous, and their penal Sanctions are so too. Certainly therefore GOD may justly inflict the Punishment contain'd in the Sanction of the Law upon the Transgressor; and consequently, we may without Fear infer, That to relieve him from that Penalty is a *most free Act*, to which GOD was not necessarly oblig'd. And indeed, tho' all this had not been said, the Thing is in it self clear; for we can frame no other Notion of *Forgiveness* than this, *That it is a voluntary and free Act of Grace, which remits the Punishment, and looses the Sinner from that Punishment he justly deserved, and which the Law-giver might justly have inflicted on him.* Now this being clear, we subsume, That *such Acts* cannot be known otherwise than, either by *Revelation*, that is GOD's declaring himself expressly to this Purpose, or by the *Deed it self*, some *positive Act* of *Forgiveness*, which is the Effect of such a Purpose. The *Deists* disown and deny *any Revelation.* And for any Effect declarative of such a Purpose, we shall challenge the World to produce it. There never was, nor is any one Person, of whom we can certainly affirm, upon the Information

formation only of *Nature's Light*, that GOD has forgiven him, either upon *Repentance* or without *it*. And if there were ſuch Perſons, it would not bear the Weight of a *general Concluſion*, that GOD has done it, therefore he will do it to all, in all other Inſtances.

II. I reaſon againſt this ſuppos'd Conſtitution from the *Extent* of it, that GOD will pardon *all penitent Sinners*. If this is not ſaid, he pardons none upon their *Penitence*: For if *any penitent Sinner* can be ſuppos'd to remain *unpardoned*, why may not all? Beſides, if a *penitent Sinner* is *puniſhed*, then it muſt be upon ſomewhat elſe than *Penitence*, that he who is pardon'd obtains *Remiſſion*. For if *meer Penitence* had been ſufficient, a Penitent could not have ſuffered. Now if all penitent Sinners are forgiven, and *Nature's Light* aſſures them that they ſhall be forgiven, then the Extent of this Conſtitution is very large. For 1. It makes void the penal Sanction of the *Law* as to *all Sins, however atrocious they are*, if the Sinner is only a *Penitent*. 2. It extends to all Ages, Places and Generations of Men, that ever have been or ſhall be in the World. 3. It reaches to all Sorts of Perſons, even thoſe who are in Capacity to introduce the greateſt Diſorders into the Government of the World, as well as the meaneſt Offenders. Well then, the *Deiſts* muſt maintain that it is thus enacted, and this Act or Conſtitution is in all this Extent publickly declar'd by the *Light of Nature*, ſo that all may know it. 4. It reaches to all Sins, paſt, preſent and to come; they ſhall all be forgiven, if the Sinner do only repent. Now againſt ſuch an extenſive Conſtitution, we offer the following Conſiderations;

1. All wiſe Governours who have any Regard to the Honour of their Laws, Authority, and Governments, uſe to be very ſparing in indemnifying Tranſgreſſion. And no wonder they ſhould; for wiſe and juſt Rulers are not wont to enact Penalties, but in Proportion to Offences. And therefore, a paſſing eaſily from them tends to make Tranſgreſſion cheap, and weaken the Conſtitution, and ſo diſſolve the Government. Now GOD is no leſs tender of the Honour of thoſe Laws, which enact Nothing but what is the Tranſcript of his own righteous Nature, and the Oppoſite whereof he has the deepeſt Abhorrency of, as contrary to the ſame. And can we then reaſonably ſuppoſe him to be ſo laviſh of *Forgiveneſs* as to eſtabliſh it in ſo ſtrange an Extent? I believe it will be hard for any thinking Man to judge ſo.

2. In all well ordered Governments, *Pardon* is a *particular Act of Grace*, restricted to some Time, Place and Person; yea and Crimes too: And therefore is never extended so universally as here it is, and if it is to the Purpose must be asserted. So that the common Reason of Mankind declares against such a Constitution: For what is or may be pretended of impenitent Sinners being excluded, is in very Deed, no Restriction of the Law indemnifying Transgressors of whatever Sort, that are but willing to be indemnified. For impenitent Sinners are they only who have no Will to be pardon'd, or who will not accept of Favour. Now to indemnify all that are willing to be pardon'd is a very odd Constitution. And before I ascribe this to the *Wisdom* of the *great Ruler* of the World, I must see better Reasons than I am ever like to see in this Case.

3. No wise Government ever enacted *Pardon* of such an universal Extent, *without further Security for the Honour of the Government*, into a perpetual and standing Law. *Pardon* and *Acts of Grace* are a Part of *the Soveraignty* of the Governour: And however he may make them very extensive sometimes; yet he always reserves it to in his own Power, that it shall afterwards be voluntary and free to him to forgive or not as he shall see Cause.

4. Such a Constitution is especially irreconcileable with *Wisdom* and *Equity*, if it is extended to Transgressions not yet committed; for in that Case it looks like an Invitation to Sin.

5. And this binds more strongly, if the Persons are strongly inclin'd to Sin.

6. More especially such a Constitution is never to be reconcil'd with *Wisdom*, if it is universally made known and publish'd without any Provision made for securing of the Honour of the *Law*, against any Abuse of such Grace. Now I desire to know if *Nature's Light* discovers such an *Act* and *Declaration of Grace*. Where is there any Care taken, or any Provisos insert in the Declaration that can evidence the Regard GOD has for his Laws, and secure against the Abuse of such Kindness? Indeed the Scripture Discovery of *Mercy* to penitent Sinners, on Account of *Christ's Satisfaction*, fully removes all those Difficulties which otherwise, so far as I can see, are never to be remov'd: And therefore I can never see how such a Declaration could be made without the concomitant Discovery of a *Satisfaction to Justice*, and Reparation of the Honour of the Law-giver and Law, and Security against Abuse of Grace. Remarkable to this Purpose are the Words of the learn'd

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and judicious Dr. *How*, " That Prince would
" certainly never be ſo much *magnify*'d for his *Living Temple*,
" *Clemency*, and *Mercy*, as he would be deſpis'd Part 2. P. 327.
" by all the World, for moſt remarkable *Defects*
" *of Government*, that ſhould not only pardon whoſoever of his Subjects
" had offended him, upon their being ſorry for it; but go about to
" provide, a Law ſhould obtain in his Dominions, through all after-
" time, that whoſoever ſhould offend againſt the Government, with
" whatſoever Inſolency, Malignity and Frequency, if they repented,
" they ſhould *never be puniſh*'d, but be taken forthwith, into higheſt
" Favour. Admit that it had been congruous to the *Wiſdom* and
" *Righteouſneſs* of GOD, as well as his *Goodneſs*, to have pardon'd a
" *particular Sinner*, upon *Repentance*, without *Satisfaction*; yet nothing
" could have been more apparently unbecoming him, than to ſettle
" an *univerſal Law* for all future Time, to that Purpoſe, that let as
" many as would, in any Age to the World's End, affront him never
" ſo highly, invade his Rights, trample his Authority, and tear the
" Conſtitution of his Government, they ſhould upon their *Repentance*
" be forgiven, and not only not be puniſh'd, but be moſt highly ad-
" vanc'd, and dignify'd. Thus far he. In the ſubſequent Paragraph
he learnedly and judiciouſly ſhews the Difference in the Goſpel Propoſal
of *Mercy* to Offenders, from this ſuppos'd Caſe of *Forgiveneſs* without
Satisfaction.

III. I enquire, Whether is it poſſible that there may be *any Crime ſo atrocious*, that it may be poſſible for GOD, in a Congruity with his Perfections, to puniſh, notwithſtanding of the Intervention of *Repentance*? If there may be any ſuch, then certainly it is not meerly on Account of *Repentance* that Sin is pardon'd: And ſo a Penitent cannot always be ſure of *Forgiveneſs*. Further, conſidering how grievous and ſinful every Tranſgreſſion of GOD's Law is, how can I be ſure what Sins are pardonable upon *Repentance*, and what not? If it is not poſſible for GOD to puniſh any Penitent, then 1. I would enquire what ſo great Matter is there in *Repentance*, that can bind GOD up from *vindicating his Honour* againſt Affronts already offer'd? 2. To what Purpoſe was the *penal Sanction* ſince, in the Caſe it was deſign'd? For when the *Law* is *tranſgreſs*'d, it may not poſſibly take Place, but the Execution is inconſiſtent with the Nature of GOD. 3. How will this *Impoſſibility* ever be proven? *Repentance* hath nothing in it ſo great to infer it: For in *Repentance* no more can be alledg'd but a *Return to*

Duty,

Duty antecedently due. And as to this, *we are unprofitable Servants.* And Christ has told us what Reason tells us also, that we deserve no Thanks for it. And as for the other Part, *Sorrow for Bygones*, it is the necessary Result of that Regard to the Deity, and Knowledge of our own Sin, that is likewise our own Duty. Now what is there, in all this, that should be suppos'd to be of so great Worth, that it must inevitably stop the Course of Justice?

But here it may be objected, not only by *Deists*, but some, who are very far from favouring them, "That GOD "cannot cast away from his Love and Felicity "any Soul, which truly loveth him above all, "and which so repenteth of his Sin, as to return "to GOD in Holiness and Life.

Baxter *Reasons of Christ. Relig.* Part 1. Pag. 184, 188.

I answer, 1. The Supposition that a Sinner convinc'd of Sin can repent without some Security given as to Pardon, can love GOD above all, and so repent as to turn to Holiness in Heart and Life, appears to me impossible. Much less is it possible that an unconvinc'd Sinner can repent. The Reason is plain, a clear Conviction of Sin inevitably casts us under the deepest Fear of GOD, and Dread of Punishment from him, which not only casts out that Love, but draws on Hatred, or at least, strong Aversion; as we heard the learn'd *Amyrald* well observe in the Words before quoted. Now it is certain, that suppose *one Impossible*, twenty will follow. 2. If the Thing is not impossible, which I think it is, yet certainly it is a Case that never happen'd, and is never like to happen. 3. Supposing it possible, it is a very bold Assertion, that no Crime, how atrocious soever, would justify the inflicting of the Penalty contain'd in the righteous Sanction of the Law. 4. Much less then is it hard to suppose that it would justify GOD's denying any Reward to the Sinner, that he has so sinn'd. And if it is granted that *Penitence* does not necessarly restore to a Prospect of *Reward*, all Religion and Encouragement to it is lost. I cannot forbear quoting again the accurate and judicious Dr. *How*'s Words, who after he has shown that our Offences against GOD incomparably transcend the Measure of any Offence that can be done by one Creature against another, presently subjoins, "Yea, and "as it can never be thought congruous, that "such an Offence against an humane Governour, "should be pardoned, without the *interveening Repentance* of the "Delinquent; so we may easily apprehend also *the Case to be such*,

Living Temple, Part 2. P. 240.

as

as that it cannot *be fit*, it ſhould be pardoned on *that alone*, without other Recompence: Whereof if any ſhould doubt, I would demand, Is it, in any Caſe, *fit*, that a *penitent Delinquent* againſt humane Laws and Government, ſhould be puniſh'd, or a proportionable Recompence be exacted for his Offence notwithſtanding? Surely it will be acknowledged ordinarly fit; and *who would* take upon him to be the *Cenſor* of the *common Juſtice* of the World in all ſuch Caſes! Or to damn the Proceedings of *all Times and Nations*, whereſoever a *penitent Offender* hath been made to ſuffer the legal Puniſhment of his Offence, notwithſtanding his *Repentance?* How ſtrange a *Maxim of Government* would that be, *That it is never fit an Offender, of whatſoever Kind, ſhould be puniſhed, if he repent himſelf of his Offence!* And ſurely, if ever, in *any Caſe*, ſomewhat elſe than *Repentance* be fitly inſiſted on as a *Recompence*, for the Violation of the ſacred Rights of Government, it may well be ſuppoſed much more ſo *in the Caſe of Man's common Delinquency* and Revolt from GOD.

IV. I reaſon againſt this Poſition, from the Conſideration of the *Imperfection* of this *Repentance*, which, as it takes Place amongſt ſinful Men, is guilty of a *double Imperfection*. Our *Sorrow* and our *Return* are imperfect, in Reſpect of *Degrees*. Our Relation to GOD and his to us requires the higheſt, the moſt perfect Love, and the moſt cordial Obedience. No leſs will anſwer our Obligations. And our *Sorrow*, if it is requir'd, muſt be ſuppos'd likewiſe to be ſuch as reſults neceſſarly from ſuch a Love. Now what can be more evident than this, that none of the Children of Men love GOD as they ought, and with that Intention and Vehemency, which anſwers their *Original Obligation?* And conſequently their *Sorrow* and *Obedience* can never come up to it: For they being the Reſult of this Love, can never go beyond the Principle, which influences them. Again, our *Return* is liable to another Imperfection, even a frequent Interruption. The Caſe is not thus, that we only once, through Infirmity, make an Eſcape; but even after our *ſuppos'd Return*, it muſt be allow'd that there will be *After-deviations*. And hence it becomes a Queſtion, How can we expect *Acceptance* in our *Returns?* How can our *Repentance*, which anſwers not the Demands of the Law, and our Ties to Duty be accepted for it ſelf? And if ſo, much more may it be a Queſtion, How can it be allowed ſufficient to attone for other Tranſgreſſions, yea, how can it be ſufficient to attone for Tranſgreſſions, which it takes no Notice of? For there are ſuch Sins as by the *Light of Nature* we are never likely to reach the Conviction of; and therefore it's impoſſible we ſhould ſorrow for them,

them, or repent of them? However Men may please themselves with a Fancy of the *Sufficiency* of their *Repentance*; yet a Sinner, that understands his own Case, will never be able to satisfie his own Conscience in this Matter.

Dr. Whichcot's *Select Sermons*, Part 2d, Serm. 2d, *on* Acts 13. 38. P. 322, 323.

I know it is pleaded, "That we have a harder Province to administer, than even the *Angels* themselves; they not having so gross a Body as we have, nor exposed to so much Evil as we are. But GOD he knoweth our Frame, and upon that Account, is not extream to mark what is done amiss. A Creature, as a *Creature*, is finite and fallible: And yet we are not the most perfect of GOD's Creation. Now, for *fallible* to *fail*, is no more than for *frail* to be *broken*; and *mortal* to *die*. Where there is finite and limited Perfection, there is not only a Possibility, but a Contingency to fail, to err, to be mistaken, not to know, and to be deceived. And where the Agent is such, there is Place for *Repentance*. *Repentance* is that which makes a finite *Being* failing, capable of Compassion. If *Repentance* did not take Effect, it would be too hazardous for a Creature to come into *Being*. If upon a Lapse, an Error, or Mistake, we should be undone to Eternity, without all Hope of Recovery: Who would willingly enter upon this State? Thus speaks Dr. *Whichcot*.

To this plausible Discourse we answer, either this Reasoning proceeds upon the State of Things, according to the *Covenant of Grace*, and respects them who have laid hold on it, or it does not: If it does proceed on this Foot, we say it helps not the *Deists*: But if, as it seems, it be extended further, then I shall make the following Remarks on it. 1. Albeit we have here many Things prettily said, yet I cannot but deeply dislike the Discourse, because it aims at the *Extenuation of Sin*, and pleads its Excuse from our Frailty. Now besides that this bears hard upon the Author of our Constitution, as if he had made it unequal to the Laws he impos'd on it; 'tis a foolish Argument, because the Case may be as much exaggerate on the other Hand by representing the *Greatness* of the *Law-giver*, the *Equality* of the Laws, and the *Ability* of Man, at least in his *first Make* to obey. And the one will not signifie more to give us Hope of *Forgiveness* on our *Repentance*, than the other will to make us *despair* of it. 2. It seems to reflect on GOD's different Conduct with the Angels that sinn'd, who had no Place allow'd them for *Repentance*: For their Frame was finite,

and

and ſo frail and failable. The little Difference from the Groſſneſs of our Bodies, if Man is not ſuppos'd *corrupt*, and his Body inclin'd to *Evil*, makes no Difference that can ſatisfy; for ſtill we were under no Neceſſity of ſinning from our Conſtitution, if it is not ſuppos'd corrupt. But to pretend that Man was made corrupt, carries our Frailty too far, to make it GOD's Deed. We cannot plead, in Excuſe, any Defects in our Conſtitution, that GOD put not there. 3. It damns all humane Laws that ſpares not penitent Tranſgreſſors. If it be ſaid, That they are under a Neceſſity to do it. I anſwer whence doth this Neceſſity ariſe? Is the Honour of the Divine Law leſs dear to him and of leſs Conſideration, than the Honour and Rights of humane Conſtitutions and Governments? But further I deſire to know, Will Neceſſity juſtify the Puniſhment of the Penitent? If not, then here it doth not juſtify: If it doth, who will aſſure me that there is not as great Neceſſity for this Courſe in divine, as humane Governments? At leaſt in ſome Inſtances. And if in any Inſtance the Puniſhment of a Penitent may take Place, who will condeſcend where it may and where not? How likewiſe, can it be ſaid, That *Penitence* ſecures *Pardon?* Further, 4. I ſay directly to the Argument; If divine Laws are as much adjuſted to Man's *Power*, as the Conſtitutions and Laws of humane Government are (and they behoov'd to be ſo, with Reſpect to his Power in his firſt Conſtitution has been made appear) then it is no more hazardous to come into *Being*, than to enter into *humane Society*, where frail Man may, for a Word or a Deed, forfeit his own Life to Juſtice and all the Advantages of it, and beggar his Poſterity, and that without any Proſpect of Relief by his *Repentance*. If it be ſaid, The Puniſhments are greater in this Caſe; I grant it: So are the *Laws* too, and conſequently the *Tranſgreſſions*: And ſo likewiſe are the Advantages of *Obedience*; and without an injurious Reflection on GOD, it cannot be denied that the Laws are, as well at leaſt, attempered to Man's Abilities wherewith he was created and ſubjected to them. 5. I do not ſee how it can be *in Juſtice* to inflict a *juſt Puniſhment* upon Tranſgreſſors; and ſuch *of Neceſſity*, that is, which is included in the Sanction of the divine Laws. Nor does *Repentance* make that Execution unjuſt; which, without it, is allow'd not only juſt, but *indiſpenſibly* neceſſary. This I might largely ſhew, but others have done it well.

See Specimen Refutationis Crellii, Pag. 100, 101, & *ſequ.*

V. The Falshood of this Proposition may be further evidenc'd from the Nature of the *Justice of GOD*, that seems necessarily to require that *Sin be punished.* For clearing this, I shall make the ensuing Observations: In doing which, we shall aim at such a gradual Progression as may set the Matter in the best Light.

1. *Justice* strictly taken, is *that Vertue of the rational Nature, whose Business it is to preserve, maintain and be a Guardian of the Rights of rational Beings.* It is commonly defin'd a *constant and abiding or fix'd Will of giving to every one what is their Right or Due.* Whence it has been debated, whether in Man there is any such Thing as *Self-justice*; because, according to this Account of *Justice*, it seems to be restricted to the *Rights* of others. And this Restriction has Countenance given to it from that common Maxim, That *volenti non fit Injuria*, which is founded in this, That a Man is suppos'd capable of parting, without wrong, with his own Rights, and consequently is not capable of Injustice towards himself. It is true, Man has no *Rights*, which he may not denude himself of by his own Consent. Yet since Man has *such Rights*, tho' they are but derived ones, as also his *Being* is, as he cannot denude himself of without Fault, I see not but even such a Thing as *Self-justice* may take Place among Men: But whatever the Case be as to Men, there is certainly in GOD to be allow'd such a Thing as *Self-justice.* For clearing of which, I observe,

2. That GOD, being the *Fountain of all Rights*, has certainly *Rights*, which he can by no Means denude himself of. He has a *Right* of *Dominion* over the Creature, and to the Creatures Subjection, that he cannot part with. As long as there is a *rational Creature*, it is, by its *Being*, inevitably subject to its *Creator*, and he cannot part with that *Right* he has to govern it. "With the *supreme Pro-*
Living Temple, Part 2. P. 270. "*prietor*, there cannot but be *unalienable Rights*, "inseparably and everlastingly inherent in him: "For it cannot be, but that he, who is the "*Fountain of all Rights* must have them *primarly* and *originally* in "*himself*; and can no more so quit them, as to make the Creature "*absolute* and *independent*, than he can make the Creature GOD. Hence inevitably there must be allow'd *Self-justice*, which is nothing else, save *that fix'd Determination of the divine Will, not to part with what is his own unalienable Right*, and consequently *to maintain it.*

3. *This Justice*, in Order to maintain GOD's *Right of Government*, obliges him to enact *penal Laws* as the Measure of the Creatures Subjection

Subjection and Obedience. A *Subject* he cannot be without *Laws*. And where the Creature is capable of transgressing, *Laws* cannot be such without *Penalties*. Without those, they were rather *Counsels* or *Advices*, than *Laws*; and the Person to whom they are given is left at Will to be subject, or not. And if GOD should thus leave the Creature without a *Penalty*, then upon Transgression, the Transgressor has slipt entirely out under the Dominion of GOD; for he is not *actively*, in that Instance, subject to GOD. And neither is he *passively* subject, if there is no *Penalty*. So that by this Means GOD has forfeited or lost his *Right* which is impossible. There is no other imaginable Ty of Subjection, but either the *Precept* or the *penal Sanction* of the *Law*, whereby rational Creatures, as to their *moral Dependence* can be bound. Now if GOD part with the one, by remitting the *Penalty*, or enacting Laws without it, and Man cast off the other by *Disobedience*, the Creature is, at least thus far, *independent*. Which how absurd it is, 'tis easy to see. Wherefore, in Case the Creature is *made*, we cannot but suppose a *Law* must be made to it. And if the Creature is capable of *violating* that *Law*, there must, for preserving that *Right*, which GOD has to the Creatures Subjection, be a *Penalty* annex'd to *that Law*. Whence it seems evident, " That GOD did owe
" it to himself primarly, as the absolute So- *Living Temple*,
" veraign and Lord of all, not to suffer Indignities P. 271.
" to be offer'd him, without animadverting upon
" them, and therefore to *determine* he would do so.

4. The Creature being made, *Justice* requires that it should be under such a *Law* as is enacted with a *Penalty*, and such a *Law* being now enacted, there seems to arise a double Necessity for the Execution of the Law, in Case of Transgression. The one arising from the *Reason of* the Law, the other from the *Law it self*: Since upon the Grounds already laid down, the Law was necessary; the same Grounds inforce the *Execution* of the *Law*: For when the Case falls out, for which the *Law* was provided, it is not meerly the *Law* or *Constitution* it self, but the *Execution* of it that secures the *End*. When the Creature disobeys, he has in so far renounced an *actual Dependence* on, and *Subjection* to the *Law-giver* and *Law*: And therefore it seems of Necessity that either as to these Actions he is not subject, or he must be subject to the *Penalty*. Again, as the *Reason* of the *Law* enforces the Execution, so does the *Law it self*. For the *Law* being once made, *Justice* requires that its Honour be secur'd either by *Obedience*, or by the *Subjection of the Transgressor* to the *Punishment*.

5. To proceed yet further, if the *Law* is not *executed*, the *Design*, even *the principal Design* of *Punishment* in this Case, is not reach'd. It is not the *only* or *main Design* of *Punishment* or *penal Sanctions* to reclaim the Offender, or benefit By-standers, or secure the Community. It's true, the *penal Sanction*, or *Law* enacting the *Penalty*, is of Use to deter from transgressing, and so is of Use to the Community, and all under the Government; but the Execution, if the Sanction is Punishment after this Life, is of no Advantage to the Offender, nor is it instructive to By-standers, or the rest of the Community, who do not see it, wherefore these are not the *principal Ends* of Punishment. Tho' it is to be observ'd, *That any publick Intimation that the Penalty shall not be inflicted, could not but be of the worst Consequence to the Community, as rendring it vain as to all that Use which it has of detering Persons who are under the Law from Sin.* Yet I say, these are not the *principal Ends* of *Punishment*; but the *Satisfaction* of the *Law-giver*. For the Case is not here, as it is in humane Governments, where the *Governour* and *Government* are both constituted for the Good of the Governed, which therefore must be the chief Aim of all Laws: But on the contrary, the Governed are made, and the Laws made, and Penalties enacted for the Governour, who made all Things for *himself*. And consequently, the principal Design of Punishment is the *securing and vindicating his Honour* in the Government. Nor is this any such Thing as answers to private Revenge amongst Men. " But *that* wherewith we must suppose the blessed GOD to be pleased in the Matter of punishing, *is* " *the Congruity of the Thing it self*, that the *sacred Rights of his Go-* " *vernment* over the World be vindicated, and that it be understood " how ill his Nature can comport with any Thing that is *impure*, " and what is in it self so *highly incongruous*, cannot but be the Matter " of *his Detestation*. He takes eternal Pleasure in the Reasonableness " and Fitness of his own Determinations and Actions; and rejoices in " the Works of his own Hands, as agreeing with the *apt*, *eternal* " *Schemes* and *Models*, which he hath conceived in his most wise and " All-comprehending Mind: So that tho' he desireth not the *Death* " *of Sinners*, and hath *no Delight* in the *Sufferings* of his afflicted Crea- " tures, which his *immense Goodness* rather inclines him to behold " with Compassion; yet the *true Ends of Punishment* are so much a " *greater Good*, than their *Ease* and *Exemption* from the Suffering they " had deserved; that they must *rather be chosen*, and cannot be *eligible* " for any *Reason*, but for *which also*, they are to be *delighted* in, *i. e.*

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" a *real Goodneſs*, and Conducibleneſs to a *valuable End* inherent in " them.

6. As *Juſtice* in a *ſtrict Senſe*, of which hitherto we have ſpoken, as it denotes that *Rectitude of the divine Nature, which is converſant, about and conſervative of the divine Rights*, pleads for *penal Laws* and *Puniſhment*; ſo likewiſe *Juſtice* in a *large Senſe*, as it comprehends all his *moral Perfections, Holineſs, Wiſdom, Faithfulneſs*, &c. and anſwers to that which is amongſt Men call'd *univerſal Juſtice*, pleads for the ſame: For ſo taken, it comprehends his *Holineſs* and *perfect Deteſtation* of all *Impurity*; in Reſpect whereof, he cannot but be perpetually inclin'd to animadvert with Severity upon Sin; both becauſe of its *irreconcilcable Contrariety to his holy Nature*, and the *inſolent Affront*, which it therefore directly offers him; and becauſe of the *implicite* and *moſt injurious Miſrepreſentation of him* which it contains in it, as if he were either *kindly* or *more indifferently* affected towards it: Upon which Accounts, we may well ſuppoſe him to eſteem it neceſſary for him, both to *conſtitute a Rule for puniſhing it*, and to *puniſh it accordingly*; that he may both *truly act* his own Nature, and *truly repreſent it*. Again it includes, thus taken, his *governing Wiſdom*, which requires indiſpenſibly that he do every Thing in his Government ſo as he may appear *like himſelf*, and anſwerably to his *own Greatneſs*; ſo as to ſecure a *deep Regard* for his *Government*, and all the Parts of the Conſtitution. In Reſpect whereof, it might be ſhown, That the *Puniſhment of Sin*, or the *Execution* of the *penal Laws* ſolemnly enacted is neceſſary. *Wiſdom* takes Care that one Attribute do not quite obſcure another, and will not allow that he gratify *Mercy* to the Detriment of *Juſtice*. Again, it includes his *Faithfulneſs* and *Sincerity*, which ſeem pledged in enacting the Penalty for its Execution. How is it conſiſtent with them to enact ſuch ſevere Penalties, if he may remit them without any *Reparation* made for the *Wrong* done? Any one that would ſee more to this Purpoſe, beſides others, who have diſcours'd of *vindictive Juſtice*, may peruſe the learn'd Dr. *How*'s Living Temple, Part 2d, Chap. 6 and 7, who has learnedly diſcourſed and improven this Subject: To whom we own our ſelves indebted for much Light in this Matter.

Thus it ſeems evident, That whether we take the *divine Juſtice* in this laſt and largeſt Notion, as its comprehenſive of all *the Perfections* of the *Deity*, or in the former and ſtrict Notion as it imports a *Vertue*, whoſe Province it is to take Care of the Preſervation of the *incommunicable Rights* of the *Diety*, and vindicate their Honour; it ſeems *neceſſarily*

farily to forbid the *Remission of Sin* without the *Punishment* of the Transgressor, or a *Reparation* of the *injur'd Honour* of the *Deity*.

If it is alledg'd, That by *Repentance* the Sinner returns to *his Subjection*, and so the Honour of GOD's Government is repair'd. I answer, That upon Supposition of the Sinner's *Return*, its being a *sufficient Reparation* of the Honour of the Deity, there would indeed be *no Necessity* of *Punishment*: But this is the Question, and the Objection begs what is in Question. The Principles now laid down clear, That *Justice* however taken, must take Care to preserve and vindicate GOD's Honour in Case of Transgression. The *penal Sanction* of the *Law* tells us, That the *Punishment* of the Transgressor is that which *Wisdom* and *Justice* have fix'd on, as proper for this End. There is no Alternative, *Punishment* or *Repentance*. The Law makes only Mention of *Punishment*. When therefore the Objectors say that *Repentance* is *sufficient*, we deny it. They do not prove it, nor can they. GOD, to whom alone it belongs to determine what is necessary for the Vindication of his own Honour, must determine the *Reparation*: We cannot. Yea, it were Presumption in Angels to do it. GOD has fix'd upon *Punishment*. If he allow of any Thing else, the *Light of Nature* does not tell it. Nor is there any Thing in the Nature of *Repentance*, as has been above clear'd, that can induce us to think it's *sufficient* to this Purpose. The most vertuous, who must be suppos'd the *Penitents*, if there are any such, meet with as heavy Punishments in this Life as any, which shews, at least, that GOD looks not upon their *Penitence* as *Satisfaction*.

VI. Against this Proposition we reason thus, Every Man is endued with a *Power to repent* when he pleases, or he is not. To assert the Latter, were to yield the Cause; for it matters not to the Sinner, whether *Repentance* be a *sufficient Attonement* or not, if it be not in his *Power to Repent*. Besides it's a Question in this Case of considerable Difficulty, Whether it is consistent with the Perfections of GOD to give *this Power*, till once *his Honour* is secur'd by a *suitable Reparation* for the *Injury* done it by *Sin*. If it is in the Sinner's *Power to repent* when he pleases, then again I insist,

Either GOD without Impeachment of his *Justice* may inflict *the Punishment* contain'd in the *Sanction of the Law* on the Sinner, notwithstanding of his *Repentance*, or he may not: If he may, then the *Deists* can never without *Revelation* be sure that he will not inflict the Punishment, which is what we say: Nor will it mend the Matter, that

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tho' GOD, without Impeachment of his *Juſtice*, may puniſh the *repenting Sinner*, that he cannot do it without injuring his *Mercy*; for what is contrary to one of GOD's Attributes, is ſo to all: And moreover, the *Juſtice* of GOD in particular requires that each of the divine Attributes have their due.

But if it be ſaid, That GOD *cannot* in Juſtice puniſh the *repenting Sinner*; then I deſire to be ſatisfied, if this does not evacuate and make void the *penal Sanction* of the *Law*? For if every Man hath a *Power* to repent when he pleaſes, and *this Repentance* ſtops the Execution of the Sentence, I don't ſee but any may offend without Hazard.

All that can be ſaid is, That GOD may ſurpriſe Man in the very *Act of Sinning*, or *ſo ſoon* after it, that he ſhall not have Time to *repent*, and ſo Man's *Hazard* is *ſufficient* to deter him from *Sin*.

But to this I anſwer, That the Conſideration of *this Hazard* can never have much Influence on Man, to make him refuſe the gratifying of his Senſes, in which he finds ſo much Pleaſure, ſo long as in the ordinary Conduct of Providence he ſees that GOD very rarely takes that Courſe of ſnatching away Sinners in the very *Act of Sin*, or ſo ſoon after, as to preclude *Repentance*. It is not ſo much what GOD may do, as what he ordinarly does, that is of Weight to determine Men, eſpecially when they have ſo ſtrong Motives to perſwade them to the contrary, as the impetuous Cravings of unruly Luſts are known to be.

This Argument gives us a clear View how much the *Deiſts* Notion of *Pardon* upon *meer Repentance* favours *Sin*; and how unreaſonable the Out-crys of *Herbert* and *Blount*, repeated *ad Nauſeam*, againſt the Mantainers of *Satisfaction* really are. They ſay, The *Doctrine of Satisfaction* makes *Sin cheap*. But whether do they who ſay that *Sin* cannot be pardon'd without the Sinner's *Repentance* and *Satisfaction*, or they who aſſert *Repentance alone* ſufficient, make *Sin cheapeſt*?

VII. I further argue againſt this Doctrine, That this *Conſtitution*, *Grant* or *Allowance* of *Repentance*, in Caſe of Tranſgreſſion, is either *co-eval* to the *Law*, and has its *Riſe* as the *Law* hath, in the Relation betwixt GOD and Man and their Natures, as being a neceſſary Reſult of them; or it is a poſterior Eſtabliſhment, and an *Act of free* and *gracious Condeſcendence* in GOD, to which he was not neceſſarily oblig'd. If this laſt is ſaid, then ſay I, This could not be known, but by a *Revelation* or ſome Deed of GOD, expreſſive of his Mind in this Matter. The Firſt is deny'd by the *Deiſts*; and we deſire them to produce

produce the *Work of Providence*, whereon it's legible, that GOD without any other Reparation to his *Justice*, for the Injury done him by *Sin*, will pardon the Sinner upon his *Penitence* and admit him to *Bliss*. For tho' we should admit that some *Works of Providence* singly taken, without observing others which have a contrary Aspect, have somewhat like an Intimation of a *Placability*, which we see but little Reason to do; yet we deny positively that there is any that specifies the Terms, or particularly condescends on *Repentance*, as that whereon he will be pacify'd and reconcil'd to Sinners. And if any will pretend to draw this from them, I wish they would essay it, and let us see of what Form their Procedure will be: Perhaps they may prove that it's not consistent with GOD's Attributes to pardon an impenitent Sinner: But if they think thence to infer, That therefore it's consistent to his *Attributes* to pardon one meerly upon his *Penitence*, they may make good the Consequence if they can; they will find it harder than it appears.

If the Former is said, That this Constitution is *co-eval* with the *Law*, and is as much a necessary Result of the *Nature of GOD* and *Man*, and their *mutual Relation* as the Law it self. Besides what has been said to demonstrate the Folly of it, let these three Things be considered;

1. The *Deists* do and are oblig'd to say, That Man is not now from his *Birth* more corrupt than he was at first.

2. Man at his *Original* was, and consequently according to them, still is endued with *Power*, sufficient perfectly to know and obey the *Law* he is subjected to. To say that he was subjected to a *Law*, which he was not able to know or obey, is to accuse the Deity of *Folly* and *Injustice*; as has been made appear.

3. The *Law* to which Man is subjected, is exactly suited to GOD's *great Design*, his *own Glory* and *Man's Happiness*.

These being granted, I conceive it evident, 1. That Nothing can be said more injurious to the glorious Perfections of GOD, than that any of them gives Ground of Hopes, far less Assurance of *Impunity* to Man, if he break these Laws, which are equally suited to promote GOD's Glory and his own Good, and which he wanted neither Power to know nor obey. 2. Such a Grant would be of no less dangerous Consequence to Man, because it could be of no other Use, than to tempt to a Violation of those Laws, which it is so much his Interest to obey.

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But some may say, It would be discouraging to Man to think he were *undone*, if he disobey'd in the least. I answer, This could be no reasonable Discouragement if he was possessed of *Power* perfectly to know and obey the Law he was subjected to.

Again, it may be said, That it was necessary there should be such an Incouragement to Man; because, tho' he were intrusted with *sufficient Power* to know and obey the Law of GOD; yet he was *for Trial* expos'd to a great many strong and forcible Temptations to Disobedience.

For Answer to this; suppose two Men *equally able* to know and obey the *Law*; the one knows he may obtain *Pardon* on *Repentance*, the other believes himself *irrecoverably lost* if he transgress; I desire the Objecter, on Supposition that both were attack'd with a Temptation equally strong, to answer me seriously, 1. Which of those two would in all Probability soonest yield; he that saw a *Probability* of Escape, or he that saw *none*? 2. Since the keeping of the Law was highly advantagious to both, which of the two is in the best State? he who has this strong Motive to *Obedience, that he is ruin'd if he disobey*; or he that hath this Encouragement and Inforcement of the Temptation to Disobedience, *that he may disobey and escape*? Nor will they evade by saying, That this Constitution was knowable before, but was not taken notice of till *Sin* fell out: For if it might be known, all the Inconveniencies mention'd will follow. Besides, if it was taken notice of after the *first Sin*, it might be a Temptation to all succeeding Transgressions.

In Fine, If this *Allowance of Repentance* be said to have the same *Rise* with the *Law*, and be equally necessary from the *Nature* of GOD and Man and their *mutual Relation*; it is a *plain Dispensation* with the *Law*, and that equally made publick, being notified in the same Way as the *Law* is; which how it is consistent with the *Wisdom*, *Holiness* and *Justice* of GOD, I know not.

VIII. To add no more on this Head, If this Story about the *Sufficiency* of *Repentance* lies so open to the *Light of Nature*, whence was it that it was so little discerned? The Name of it, in the Sense and to that Use we now speak of, scarce occurs amongst the Ancients, if we may believe *Herbert*, who read them all with great Diligence, and with a Design to find what was for his Purpose. Speaking of their Sins, he says, " *Neque igitur mihi Dubium est,*
" *quin eorum pœnituerit Gentiles, quæ tot Mala* Herbert *de Relig.*
" *accersierunt, licet* rarius quidem *Pœnitentiæ Gentil. P.* 198.
" Verbum inter Authores, eo, quo jam usurpa-

" tur Sensu, reperiatur. Why does not he doubt of it? The Reason he goes on is, Because they us'd *Sacrifices*. But I suppose for this very Reason some do doubt if they thought *Repentance sufficient*: But of this more by and by. The *Philosophers* neither taught nor practis'd it. It's true, *Periander* one of the wise Men of *Greece*, had this for his saying, Αμαρτῶν μεταβολὴν, *Repent of thy Sins*; that is, possibly, leave them off. For who can tell us whether he had a right Notion of *Repentance*, or of what Avail he thought it? *Seneca* says, *Quem pœnitet peccasse pene est innocens.* This is spoken with his usual Pride that made him think little of *Sin*. But where is the Person that taught *Repentance*, or offered to evince it *sufficient* to attone the *Deity*? Most of them contemptuously disregarded it. We find Nothing like it in their best Moralists Practice: But on the contrary, they were so puft up with their *Vertues*, that they made no Account of their *Sins*. The Priests taught not this Doctrine, for they inculcated *Sacrifices* as necessary to *attone* the *Deity*. And if we may believe no incompetent Judge, both Priests and People were perswaded that *Repentance* is *not sufficient* to attone the *Deity*. It is *Cæsar*, who tells us, that, " *Pro Vita Hominis nisi* " *Vita Hominis reddatur non posse Deorum Im-* " *mortalium Numen placari arbitrantur* Galli. To which we might add many mo Testimonies to the same Purpose. Nor do we find any Thing like this Discovery among them; which is very strange in a Matter of Importance, if it was so clearly reveal'd. That which is most like what they would be at, is what we find in *Ovidius*.

Ibid. 197.

Cæsar *de Bello* Gal. *Lib.* 6.

See Outramus *de Sacrificiis, Lib.* 1. *Cap.* 22.

De Ponto, *Lib.* 1. *Eleg.* 1.
Sæpe levant Pœnas, ereptaque Lumina reddunt
Quem bene Peccati pœnituisse vides. Et albi, a Li Li

Ibid. Eleg. 7.
Quamvis est igitur Meritis indebita nostris,
Magna tamen Spes est in Bonitate Dei.

But this is Nothing to the Purpose: How many of the *Poets* Notions, and particularly this one, were traditional? How evidently were their Notions of all Things about the Gods suited to their own fabulous Stories of the *Clemency* of the Gods. And besides, we have no Assurance that he understood what we do by *Repentance*. Nor indeed could he. But of this more anon.

Objections

Objections conſidered.

IT remains now that we take notice of ſome conſiderable Objections that are made againſt what hitherto has been diſcours'd by different Perſons, on different Views and Principles.

I. Say ſome, If the Caſe is ſo apparent *that all have ſinn'd*, and the *Relief is ſo hid*, that *Nature's Light* could not diſcern it; whence is it that all Men run not to Deſpair and took Sanctuary here? Whence is it that religious Worſhip was univerſally continu'd in the World? Yea, whence is it that ſuch a Worſhip univerſally obtain'd, that ſeems founded on the Suppoſition of a *placable* GOD?

To this ſpecious Argument we anſwer, That many Things there are in *Nature*, whereof we can give no ſatisfying Account. And if there ſhould prove ſomething in *Morality* too, not to be accounted for, it were not to be wonder'd at. But not to inſiſt on this, I anſwer directly. A fair Account may be given of this otherwiſe than by admitting what we have overthrown upon ſo many clear Arguments. Towards which, we ſhall make the following Attempt. 1. The *natural Notices* of a *Deity*, that are inlaid in the Minds of Men, ſtrongly prompted them to *Worſhip* ſome one or other. From this *natural Obligation* they could not ſhake themſelves looſe. 2. Their Ignorance and Darkneſs as to the real Horrour of the Caſe, made them think little of Sin, and conſequently apprehend that it would not prove ſuch an Obſtruction to Acceptance, as really they had Reaſon to apprehend it was. 3. All who allow of *Revelation*, own that the *Revelation* of *Forgiveneſs*, as well as the *Means* of obtaining it, was *twice univerſal* in the Days of *Adam* and of *Noah*. 4. Tho' this *Revelation* was in ſo far loſt by the Generality of Mankind, that it could not be uſeful to its *proper End*, yet ſomewhat of it remain'd ſtill in the World, and ſpread it ſelf with Mankind. 5. All Sorts of Men found their Intereſt and Account in keeping it up. The *Prieſts* who ingroſs'd the Advantage of the *Religion* of the World, found their Gain in it. The *Polititians* who aim'd at the Good of Society, found it uſeful to their Purpoſe. The *Poets* who aim'd at Pleaſing, found it capable of tickling the Ears of a World involv'd in Sin. And the *People* whoſe Conſciences were harraſs'd with Guilt of atrocious Crimes, found ſome Sort of Relief. And what all found ſome Benefit by, was not likely quite to be loſt. The

Philosophers seeing the Strait of the Case, saw that they could not make a better of it and so acquiesc'd. 6. Their profane Conceptions of the *Deities*, as if they were Persons that allow'd or practis'd their Evils, did help forward. The *Gods* which their own Fancy had fram'd, they could cast into what Mould they pleas'd, as it best suited their Interest or Inclinations. 7. *Satan* who acted a very visible Part among them, and bore Sway without Controul, no doubt had a deep Hand in the Matter, and could variously revive, alter and manage the *Tradition*, *natural Notices* and *Interests* of Men, so as to make his own Advantage of them. Other Things might be added, shewing the Concernment of the holy GOD in this Matter, which I shall wave for some Reasons that are satisfying to my self. But what is said, I conceive sufficient to blunt the Edge of the Objection. I shall only subjoin the Words of the learn'd *Amyrald*, who after he has own'd the *natural Discoveries* of *Placability*; but withall shown their Uselessness, and that they had no Influence nor could have in the Words formerly quoted, at Length he moves this same Objection that we have here propos'd, and returns the Answer, which we shall now transcribe, tho' it is somewhat long, the rather because it comes from a Person not only of great Learning, but one who own'd *Placability* might be demonstrated by the *Light of Nature*, and yet denies that it was the *Foundation of the Religion* that was to be found in the World. " But perhaps, says he, it will here be demanded,

Amyrald *of Relig. Part* 1. *Chap.* 7. *Pag.* 254, 255, 256.

" Whence then came it to pass that all Nations " have each of them had its Religion? And " why are not all Men dissociated instead of " hinging together into religious Society? To " which I answer, That the Mind of Man is never agitated with the " same Emotions, nor constant in the same Thoughts; the same " Passion not always possessing him, nor the same Vice. They take " their Turns, or succeed and mingle one with another. Two Things " therefore have hindred that Men, tho' possessed with Fear, have not " abandoned all Service of the Deity, *Profaneness* and *Pride*: GOD " permitting the *Profaneness* of some and the *Presumption* of others " to temper the Terrour of Conscience. *First*, *Profaneness*; because " not weighing sufficiently how much GOD abominates Vice, and " how inexorable his Justice is, they often have flattered themselves " with this Thought, That he scarce takes any notice of small Offen- " ces, and such as are in the Intention and Purpose only, that is, in

" the

" the *Affections* of the *Will* and not in *Actions* really executed. More-
" over they thought he was not much incens'd, but with Crimes that
" turn to some notable Detriment to the Common-wealth, or carry
" some Blot of infamous Improbity. Although masculine Lust was
" either justify'd or excus'd, or tolerated by the most civiliz'd People
" of *Greece*. And they were sometimes so besotted in their Devotions,
" that they thought not but Crimes of the greatest Turpitude with
" no great Difficulty might be expiated by their *Sacrifices*, *Lustrations*,
" *religious Processions*, *Mysteries* and *Bacchanal Solemnities*. On the o-
" ther Side, *Presumption*, becaufe not sufficiently acknowledging how
" much they ought to the Deity, they imagin'd that their good
" Works, their Offerings, and the Exercise of that Shadow of Vertue,
" which they pursued, might countervail the Offences they commit-
" ted: So that they were ballanced together, there might be Hope
" not only to *avoid Punishment*, but moreover to *obtain Recompence*.
" Upon which Ground it was that *Socrates* being near his End, and dis-
" coursing of the *Immortality of the Soul*, speaks largely of his Hope,
" (in Case the Soul be not extinguished with the Body) to go and
" live with *Hercules* and *Palamedes*, and the other Persons of high
" Account. But as to asking GOD Pardon of the Offences he had
" committed, he makes no Mention at all of it; becaufe, tho' he
" spoke always dissemblingly of himself, he had in the Bottom of his
" Soul great Opinion of his own *Vertue*, and made no great reck'ning
" of his Vices, from which notwithstanding he was no more exempt
" than others. And had his Life been of such Purity, that the Eyes
" of Men could not discern a Blot in it (although some have written
" infamous Matters of him) yet when the Account is to be made up
" with GOD, there needs another *Perfection of Vertue* than that of
" his to satisfy so exact a Justice. But yet further, oftentimes these
" two Vices of *Profaneness* and *Presumption* have met together in the
" same Subject, and lull'd Men with vain Hopes into absolute Supi-
" nity. Whence the Excess of Fear hath been retrenched, which
" would otherwise have at last turn'd into Despair, and consequently
" not only dissipated all Communion in Religion, but likewise ruin'd
" all humane Society. For Fear restraining Man on the one Side
" from absolute contemning the *Deity* by *Profaneness*, on the other
" Side, *Profaneness* and *Presumption* hindred it from precipitating
" Men into that furious Despair which would have overthrown all,
" and caus'd more horrible Agitations in the Mind of Man, than ever

" the

" the most outragious *Bacchides* were sensible of. So that by the Mix-
" ture, Vicissitude and Variation of these diverse Humours has Reli-
" gion been mantain'd in the World. But it is easy to judge how
" sincere that Devotion was, which was bred of *Fear*, (a Passion that
" is naturally terminated on Hatred) *Self-presumption*, and *Misappre-*
" *hension* of the Justice of GOD. Whereas the certain Knowledge of
" the *Remission* of *Sins*, of which the *special Revelation* from Heaven can
" only give us assured Hope, is a marvellous powerful Attractive to
" Piety, out of *Gratitude* towards so *inestimable a Goodness*.

II. Some object against what has been proven, That GOD is *Good*, *Compassionate* and *Kind*. And that *Natures* of any *Excellency* take Pleasure in exercising *Mercy*, *Compassion* and *Kindness*, and Difficulty are brought to Acts of *Severity*.

I answer 1. The *Goodness*, *Kindness*, *Mercy and Compassion* of GOD are a pretty Subject for Men to declaim and make Harangues about. But when they are made, they are little to the Purpose; for they are easily answer'd by a Representation of the *Justice* and *Holiness* of GOD. And the Difficulty is not touch'd, unless Men can shew how these seemingly jarring Attributes may be consistent. 2. The Inferences Men must draw from such Representations of the *Nature* of GOD, are such as will cross the *Experience* of Mankind who want *Revelation*, and see many Effects of his *Bounty*, *Goodness*, *Forbearance* and *Patience*, but none of his *pardoning Mercy*; and many of his *Justice* and *holy Severity*. Wherefore we may leave this Subject and proceed, tho' much might be said to clear how little all this is to the Purpose. But we conceive this is apparent from what has been above discours'd.

Baxter's *Reasons of Christ. Relig. Part* 1. *Chap.* 17. §. 9. *P.* 186.

III. It is said, " That the very Command of
" GOD to use his appointed Means for Mens
" Recovery, doth imply that it shall not be in
" Vain, and doth not only shew a *Possibility*,
" but so great a *Hopefulness* of the Success to *the*
" *Obedient*, as may encourage them chearfully to
" undertake it, and carry it through.

In answer to this, I have above clear'd, That Men are still oblig'd to obey; that there are many Things, of which several are by him mention'd in the subsequent Sections of that Chapter, whence these Words are quoted, which might be improven to excite Man to a cordial Compliance, in Case there were a new, clear and plain Invitation to a *Return* with Hope of Acceptance. And I admit, That to deny this,

this, as he ſays, in the Words immediately preceeding thoſe now quoted, were to make *Earth a Hell*. Yea further, ſo long as Men are out of *Hell*, there is ſtill a *Poſſibility* in the Caſe: But that there is any ſuch *Invitation* given, or *Aſſurance* of a *hopeful Iſſue*, or *Means directly and ſpecially inſtitute by GOD as Means of Recovery*, knowable by Men left to the *meer Light of Nature*, I deny: Becauſe I ſee not the Shadow of a Proof and Evidence to the contrary that has been offer'd.

IV. It is alledg'd by the ſame Author, That GOD's commanding us to *forgive* others, encourages us to expect *Forgiveneſs* at his Hand. *Ibid.* §. 5.

To this I ſay 1. The learn'd Perſon owns, " That from this it doth not follow, That GOD " *muſt forgive* all, which he bindeth us to *for-* " *give*, for Reaſons he had before expreſs'd. *Ibid.* 2. I ſay, That this, *the Command of GOD to forgive others*, lies not ſo open to the View of *Nature's Light*, as that every one can diſcern it. And beſides, it admits of many Exceptions, for ought that *unaſſiſted Nature* can diſcover. 3. It is reſtricted to private Perſons, and is not to be extended to publick Injuries done againſt *Government*. 4. When it is found to be our Duty by *Nature's Light*, we are brought to ſee it by ſuch Reaſons as theſe, That we need the like Favour at their Hands, that we are frail, &c. which gives us Ground to be jealous that the like is not to be expected at his Hand, with whom theſe Things have no Place, which are the Reaſon of the Law to us. So that from this, as it's diſcoverable by *Nature's Light*, no ſure Inference can be drawn.

V. It is objected, That *Sacrifices* and all the *religious Services* amongſt the Heathens, were only *Symbolical* of a *good Life* and *Repentance*. *See* A. W's *Letter*, *Oracles of Reaſ.* Pag.

To this I ſay, 1. If this were true, *Herbert* and the *Deiſts* are much in the Wrong to the *Prieſts* who urg'd the Uſe of them, as Men who neglected to inculcate *Repentance*. For any Thing I can ſee they were more commendable than the *Philoſophers*, who neither taught nor practis'd *Repentance*, and vilify'd *Sacrifices*. But 2. This is a ſcandalous Falſhood: For there is Nothing more evident, than that by the *Sacrifices* they deſign'd to attone the *Deities*, and expected that they ſhould be accepted in Place of the Offerers, and their Death be admitted inſtead of what they had deſerv'd themſelves. See Abundance of Teſtimo-

Testimonies given to this by him to whom we referr'd, when we quoted *Cesar's* Testimony to this Purpose; I mean *Outram.* What, I pray, mean'd the Custom that prevail'd not only among the *Jews*, but *Heathens*, of offering their Sacrifices with solemn Prayers to GOD, that all the Plagues which they, or their Country had deserv'd, might light on the Head of the *Victim*; and so they themselves escape? And hereupon they thought that all their Sins did meet upon it, and defile it to that Degree, that none, who had touch'd it, dar'd to return home till they had wash'd and purify'd themselves. *Suidas* reports of the *Greeks*, " *Quod, ei, qui malis averruncandis quotannis destinatus* " *erat, sic imprecabantur, sis περιψημα nostrum, hoc est, Salus & Redemp-* " *tio. Atque ita illum in Mare projiciebant, quasi* Neptuno *Sacrum per-* " *solventes.* Servius tells, " *Massilienses, quoties Pestilentia laborabant,* " *unus se ex Pauperibus offerebat, alendus Anno integro publicis & puri-* " *oribus Cibis. Hic postea, ornatus Verbenis & Vestibus sacris, circum-* " *ducebatur per totam Civitatem cum Execrationibus, ut in ipsum recide-* " *rent Mala totius Civitatis; & sic projiciebatur.* But we have stay'd too long in refuting this mad and ungrounded Conceit.

VI. Some, to prove that the *Works of Providence*, particularly his *Forbearance to Sinners* and *Bounty to them, do call Men to Repentance without the Word*, urge the Apostle's Words, *Rom.* 2. 4. *Or despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness and Forbearance, and Long-suffering, not knowing that the Goodness of GOD leadeth thee to Repentance?* To this we answer,

1. Divines, and these not a few, nor of the lowest Form, do understand this whole Context of the *Jews*; and they urge Reasons for it that are not contemptible. If this Opinion hold, no more can be drawn from these Words, than what has been already granted without any Prejudice to our Cause; *viz.* That this Dispensation, where Persons are otherwise under a *Call* to *Repentance*, gives Time to repent, and enforceth the Obligation of that *Call* they are under.

Turret. *Vol.* 1. *Loc.* 1. *Quest.* 4.

2. But to cut off all Pretence of any Plea from this Scripture, we shall take under our Consideration, the Apostle's whole Discourse from the 16 Verse of the 1 Chap. to the 4. Verse of the 3d, and give a View of these Words, and other Passages insisted upon to the same Purpose, with a special Eye to the Apostle's Scope in the Discourse, and the particular Design of every Passage. And this we shall undertake,

take, not ſo much out of any Regard to this Objection in particular, but to obviate the Abuſe of ſeveral Paſſages of this Diſcourſe of the Apoſtle, by one with whom we ſhall have juſt now Occaſion to debate almoſt every Verſe in this ſecond Chapter. If therefore our Reſolution of the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe ſeem a little tedious at preſent, this Diſadvantage will be compenſate by the *Light* it will contribute for clearing many of the enſuing Objections.

The Apoſtle *Paul*, *Rom.* 1. 16. had aſſerted, That the *Goſpel is the Power of GOD to Salvation to every one that believes, to the Jew firſt and alſo to the Greek*, that is, It is the only powerful Mean of Salvation to Perſons of all Sorts; neither *Jew* nor *Greek* can be ſaved by any other Mean. In the 17 Verſe, he advances an Argument for Proof of this Aſſertion, which is plainly this; That Revelation, which exhibits *the Righteouſneſs of GOD*, which is the *only Righteouſneſs* that can pleaſe GOD, and on the Account whereof he accepts and juſtifies Sinners; and which exhibits *this Righteouſneſs*, not upon ſlender or conjectural Grounds, but *from Faith*, that is, upon the Teſtimony of the *Faithful GOD*, who can neither be deceiv'd nor deceive us, propoſes this Righteouſneſs to our *Faith*, is the only powerful Mean of Salvation: But it is the *Goſpel* only that doth reveal *this Righteouſneſs* of GOD from *Faith*, or upon the Credit of divine Teſtimony unto *Faith*: Therefore the *Goſpel* is the only powerful Mean of GOD's Appointment.

This is plainly the Apoſtle's Argument; and if we conſider it, we will find it to comprize three Aſſertions; 1. That the *Righteouſneſs of GOD* reveal'd in the Goſpel, and receiv'd by *Faith*, is that, on the Account whereof, Sinners are accepted with and juſtify'd before GOD. This is one Branch of his *firſt Propoſition*, which he deſigns to explain and confirm afterwards at Length. Here he only confirms it by hinting a Proof of it from the Prophet *Habakkuk*'s Words, *The Juſt ſhall live by Faith*, that is, Faith receiving the Righteouſneſs of GOD reveal'd in the Promiſe, is the Foundation of all the Godly, their Hopes of Pardon, Peace with GOD, Grace to ſupport under Trials, and a merciful Deliverance from them. As it is by theſe Things they live in troubleſom Times, ſo it's the Acceptance of *this Righteouſneſs*, that gives them any Right to theſe Advantages. 2. His *firſt Propoſition* implies this Aſſertion, That *this Righteouſneſs of GOD reveal'd in the Goſpel*, is the *only* effectual Mean of Acceptance with and Juſtification before GOD; or, that there is no other Way wherein any of the

Children of Men may obtain those Advantages, save this Way of accepting by Faith, *the Righteousness of GOD*, upon the Credit or Faith of his Testimony; this is the other Branch of his first Proposition. 3. The Apostle asserts in this Argument, That the *Gospel doth reveal this Righteousness of GOD; on which*, and *on which only*, Acceptance with and Justification before GOD are to be obtain'd, *from Faith to Faith*. This is the Apostle's Assumption or second Proposition.

The Apostle having hinted for present, at a sufficient Proof of the *First* of these Assertions, as has been said, passes it. He lays aside likewise the *Third* of these Assertions, designing to clear it afterwards: And addresses himself to the Proof of the *Second* in the ensuing Discourse from Chap. 1. Verse 18. to Chap. 3. Verse 20. or thereabout.

The Proposition then which our Apostle spends the whole Context under Consideration in Proof of, is, *That there is no other Way whereby a Sinner can obtain Justification before, or Acceptance with GOD, but by Faith*: Or that *neither Gentiles nor Jews can be justify'd before GOD by their own Works.*

This he demonstrates, *First* against the *Gentiles* in particular, from Chap. 1. Verse 18. to Chap. 2. Verse 16. according to our present Supposition, or Concession to our Adversaries. *Next*, He proves the same in particulur against the *Jews*, Chap. 2. to Verse 8. of Chap. 3. And from thence to the Close of his Discourse he demonstrates the same in general against *all Mankind* whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*.

1. Then, he demonstrates against the *Gentiles* in particular, That they cannot be justify'd before GOD by *the Works* they may pretend to have done in *Obedience* to the *Law of Nature*, by the ensuing Arguments, which we shall not reduce into Form; but only propose the Force of them, by laying down in the most natural and easy Order, the Propositions whereof they do consist.

I. The Apostle insinuates, Verse 18. That the *Gentiles* had some *Notions of Truth* concerning GOD, and the Worship due to him from the *Light of Nature*, Verse 18. tho' they imprison'd them: And what here he insinuates, he directly proves, Verse 19, 20.

II. He asserts, That they did not walk answerably to *these Notices*, but detain'd them *in Unrighteousness*; that is, they suppress'd, bore them down, and would not allow them that directive Power over their Practices which they claim'd; but in Opposition to them went on in Sin. This he had intimated in the General, Verse 18. and he proves it, Verse 21, 22, 23.

III. He

III. He proves, That *the Wrath of GOD is reveal'd from Heaven*, eſpecially by Inſtances of ſpiritual Plagues, the moſt terrible of all Judgments, againſt them for their counteracting thoſe *Notices of Truth*. This he had alſo intimated, Verſe 18. and proves it, Verſe 24, 25, 26.

IV. He ſhews, That the *Gentiles* being thus, by the juſt Judgment of GOD, given up and left to themſelves, did run on from evil to worſe in all Sorts of Abominations; and thereby did render their own Condemnation the more ſure, inevitable and intolerable. This he does from Verſe 26. to 32.

V. To confirm this further, Verſe 32. he ſhews, That the Fact cannot be deny'd, in Regard that they both practis'd thoſe Evils themſelves, and made themſelves guilty by their virtual Approbation of them in others: Nor could it be excus'd, ſince they could not but know, if they attended to the *Light of Nature*, that ſuch *groß Abominations* are *worthy of Death*.

VI. The Apoſtle having in the laſt Verſe of Chap. 1. mention'd this Aggravation of their Sins, that they were againſt Knowledge, takes Occaſion thence to proceed to a new Argument, whereby he at once confirms what he had ſaid about their ſinning againſt Knowledge, Chap. 1. Verſe 32. and further evinces his main Point, That they muſt inevitably be condemn'd by a new Argument, which he lays down in the enſuing Aſſertions, either expreſs'd or inſinuate.

1. He takes notice, That the *Gentiles*, if he ſpeaks of them, do themſelves practiſe thoſe Things, which they judge and condemn others for.

2. He takes it for granted, as well he may, That he who condemns any Practice of another, doth confeſs that, That Practice in it ſelf is worthy of Condemnation.

3. He hereon infers, That the *Gentiles* do practiſe thoſe Things, which according to their own Acknowledgment, are in themſelves *worthy of Condemnation*. Now this Concluſion directly fixes upon them the Aggravation mention'd in the Cloſe of the preceeding Chapter, *viz.* That they know the Things they do to be *worthy of Death*. And this ſufficiently clears the Connexion.

4. He ſubſumes again, That the Judgment of GOD being always according to Truth, he will certainly condemn all, who do Things that in Truth are worthy of Condemnation, Verſe 2.

5. Hereon by an inevitable Conſequence, Verſe 3. he concludes, That GOD will certainly condemn the *Gentiles*, which is the main Point.

6. As an Inference from the Whole, he coucludes, That as any Prospect of Escape is vain, so they are precluded from all Excuse, or Shadow of Ground for reclaiming against the Sentence of GOD, which by their own Acknowledgement proceeds only against Practices, that are in Truth worthy of Condemnation.

VII. The Apostle having thus lock'd them up, as it were, under unavoidable Condemnation, proceeds *Vers.* 4. to cut off their Retreat to that, wherein some of them took Sanctuary. They concluded, That GOD, who did forbear them, while they went on in Sin, and allow'd them te share so deep in his Goodness, would not punish them so severely. To cut off this Plea, the Apostle first taxes them as guilty of a grievous Abuse of this Dispensation, while they drew Incouragement from it to go on in Sin. 2. He argues them of gross Ignorance of the genuine Tendency of this dealing of GOD. To argue thus, *GOD spares me and is good to me, therefore I may safely sin against him and hope for his Impunity in committing known Sin against him*, is mad and unreasonable. *Reason* would say, *GOD forbears me, and so gives me Time*; he adds to *former Obligations I lay under to obey him by loading me with new Kindnesses, therefore I should be the more studious to please him, and avoid these Things, which I know will be offensive to him, and be asham'd for former Offences.* This by the Way is the full Import of that Expression, *The Goodness of GOD leading to Repentance.* But of this more anon. 3. Hereon *Vers.* 5. he infers that their Abuse of this *Dispensation* and their not returning to *Obedience*, or answering the Obligations laid on them increases their Guilt, and so lays up Materials for an additional Libel, and a more highly accented Punishment, *Vers.* 5.

Having thus shortly given an Account of the Scope and Meaning of the Words, I shall next lay down a few short Observations clearly subversive of any Argument that can be drawn from them.

1. None can say, That the Persons who were under this Dispensation did, in Fact, understand it to import a *Call to Repentance*. The Apostle accuses them of *Ignorance* of this, and of abusing it by drawing Incouragement from it, That they should *escape Punishment*, tho' they went on in Sin.

2. It's plain, the Apostle's Scope led him to no more, but this, to evince, That this Dispensation afforded them no Ground to hope for Impunity, no Encouragement to proceed in a Course of *known Sin*, that it did aggravate the Guilt of their Continuance in such Sins, and enforce the

the Obligations, they otherwiſe were under to Abſtinence from them and the Practice of neglected Duties. This is all the Words will bear, and all that the Scope requires.

3. The Apoſtle is proving, as we have clearly evinc'd above, That the Perſons, with whom he is now dealing, without Recourſe to the *Goſpel Revelation*, are ſhut up from all Acceſs to *Juſtification before GOD*, *Acceptance with him*, *Pardon* and *Salvation*; certainly therefore he cannot in this Place be underſtood to intend, That theſe Perſons were under Means *ſufficient* to lead them to *that Repentance*, upon which they might be aſſur'd of *Forgiveneſs* and *Peace* with GOD.

4. This ſame Apoſtle elſewhere appropriates the *Call to Repentance* unto the *Goſpel Revelation*, Acts 17. 30. ſpeaking to the *Heathens* at *Athens*, he ſays, —— *The Times of this Ignorance GOD winked at; but now commandeth all Men every where to repent.* Here it is plain, That Men left to the *Light of Nature*, are left without this *Call*, until the *Goſpel come* and give this *Invitation*.

5. Wherefore we may from the particular Scope of this Verſe, the general Scope of the Apoſtle's Diſcourſe, and his plain Declarations upon other Occaſions, conclude, 1. That the *Repentance* he here intends, is not *that Repentance* to which the *Promiſe of Pardon* is in the Goſpel annex'd; but only an *Abſtinence* from *theſe Evils*, which their Conſciences condemn them for, and the *Return* to ſome Sort of Performance of the material Part of known, but deſerted Duty. Frequent Mention is made of ſuch a *Repentance* in Scripture; but no where is *Pardon* promis'd upon it. 2. This *leading* imports no more, but that the Diſpenſation we ſpeak of, diſcovers this *Return* to be Duty, and gives Space or Time for it.

6. To confirm what has been now ſaid, it's to be obſerv'd, That our Apoſtle acquaints us, that this *Forbearance* and *Goodneſs* is exercis'd towards *the Veſſels of Wrath fitted to Deſtruction*, Rom. 9. 22. which ſufficiently intimates that this Diſpenſation of it ſelf, gives *no Aſſurance of Pardon* to theſe, who are under it, but is conſiſtent with a fix'd Purpoſe of puniſhing them. Yet without *this Aſſurance*, it is impoſſible there ſhould ever be any *Call* to *Repentance*, that can be available to any of Mankind, or anſwer the Hypotheſes of thoſe, with whom we have to do.

VIII. In the Cloſe of *Verſ.* 5. the Apoſtle introduces a Diſcourſe of the *laſt Judgment* for two Ends: *Firſt*, To cut off thoſe Abuſers of GOD's *Goodneſs* from all Hope of Eſcape. He has before ſhew'd that they

they have stor'd up Sins, the Causes of Wrath; and here he shews there is a Judgment design'd, wherein they will reap as they have sown. Thus the Words following are a Confirmation of the foregoing Argument, and enforce the Apostle's main Scope. *Secondly*, He does it for clearing the *Righteousness* of GOD from any Imputation that the Dispensation he had been speaking of, *viz.* his *Forbearance* and *Goodness* towards Sinners, might tempt blind Men to throw upon it: And this he does by shewing that this is not the Time of *Retribution*, but that there is an *open* and *solemn Distribution* design'd, wherein GOD will fully clear *his Righteousness*. To these *two Ends* is this whole Account of the last Judgment suited. He tells them, That there is a *Day of Wrath and of the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of GOD*. While he speaks of *the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of GOD*, he tacitly grants that by this Dispensation of *Forbearance*, the Righteousness of GOD's Judgment is some Way *clouded* or under a *Vail*: But withall he intimates that there is a definite Time, a *Day* fix'd for its Manifestation; and that this Day will prove a *Day of Wrath*, that is a *Day* wherein the vindictive Justice of GOD will signally manifest it self, in punishing such Sinners, as they were with whom he deals. In short, he acquaints them that the Design of *this Day* is *to reveal the righteous Judgment of GOD*, that is, to manifest to the Conviction of Angels and Men, the Righteousness of GOD's Proceedings toward the Children of Men, particularly as to *Rewards* and *Punishments*. It will be *righteous*, and therefore such Sinners as they shall not escape. It will be *reveal'd* to be such; and so all Ground of Calumny will be taken away. To clear this, he gives an Account of the Concernments of that Judgment, in so far as it's to his Purpose, wherein,

1. He teaches, That there will be an open *Retribution* of *Rewards* and *Punishments*, GOD will *render*, &c.

2. He shews, That GOD will proceed in *this Retribution* upon *open* and *incontestible Evidence*. He will *render according to Works*. The Persons who are to be punished, shall, to the Conviction of Onlookers, be convicted by their *Works of Impiety*; and the Piety of those, to whom the *Rewards* are given, shall in like Manner be clear'd.

3. He acquaints them, That the Distribution will be suitable to the Character of the Persons, the Nature and Quality of their Works. He will render *according to their Works*; that is, *Evil* to the Evil; *Good* to the Good. This is all that is intended by κατα, *secundum* or *according*:

according: The Meaning is not that he will render according to the *Merit* of their *Works*. For tho' I own, That GOD will punish according to the *just Demerit* of Sin; yet that is not intended here by this Phrase *according* to Works: For the Word in its proper Signification, intimates not strict or universal Proportion betwixt the Things connected by it; much less doth it particularly import, That the one is the meritorious Cause of the other: But the Word is, in all Languages, commonly taken in a more lax Signification, to denote any Suitableness betwixt the Things connected by it. So our LORD says to the blind Men, *Matth.* 9. 29. *According to your Faith be it unto you.* Who will say that *any Faith*, but especially such a lame one, as we have Reason to think they had, did merit that miraculous Cure; or that it was every Way suitable unto it? Since then the Word of it self does not import this, it cannot be taken so here, unless either other Scriptures determine us to this Sense, or something in the Context fix this to be the Meaning of it. To take it in this Sense as to *Rewards*, is so far from having any Countenance from other Scriptures, that it is directly contrair to the whole Current of them. And when the Word is taken in this Sense, then the Scriptures plainly tell that we are not *sav'd* or *rewarded by* or *according* to our *Works of Righteousness*, but *according to his Mercy through Jesus Christ*, Tit. 3. 5, 6. Nor is there any Thing in the Text or Context to incline us to take it in this Sense, but much on the contrary to demonstrate that this is not the Meaning, at least, with Respect to *Rewards*: For to say, That the *Reward* shall be given us *according* to our Works, that is *for* our Works, as meritorious of it, flatly contradicts the Apostle's Scope, which is to prove, That all Mankind *Jews* and *Gentiles* do by their Works merit only Condemnation, and that none can expect upon them *Absolution*, much less *Reward*. Besides, the *Works* here *principally* intended are not *all our Works*, nor these, which, if any had, would have the fairest Pretence to merit, *viz.* the *inward Actings* of Grace, *Faith*, *Love*, &c. but *outward Works* that are Evidences of the inward Temper and Frame of the Actors. This is evident from the Word it self, from the particular Instances elsewhere condescended upon, when the *last Judgment* is spoken of, and from the Design of this *general Judgment*.

4. He shews, That this *Retribution* will be *universal, to every one*, &c.

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5. He illustrates further the *Righteousness* of it, *Vers.* 7. by characterizing the Persons who are to be rewarded, they are such as *do well*, that is, whose Actions openly speak them *good*, and evict the *Honesty* of the *Principle* whence they flow; they *continue in Well-doing*, their Walk is uniform and habitually good; flowing from a fix'd Principle, and not from an external accidental Cause; they continue *patiently* in this Course, in Opposition to all Discouragements; nor do they aim at worldly Advantage, but at that *Glory*, *Honour* and *Immortality*, which GOD sets before them. None but they, who are *perfectly* such, shall have a *Reward*, if it is sought for, according to the Tenor of the Covenant of Works: And in this Sense not a few, nor they obscure Interpreters do take the Words; as if the Apostle had said, If there be any among you, who have *perfectly obey'd*, ye shall be *rewarded*: But whereas I have clear'd that none of you are such, ye are cut off from any Expectation of *Reward*. But if the *Sincerity of Obedience* is only intended, then the Meaning is, That GOD will of his *Grace*, according to his *Promise*, and not *for* their *Works*, give the *Reward* to the sincerely obedient; and thereby will openly evince his *Righteousness*, in dealing with them exactly, according to the Tenor of the Covenant, to which they belong; so that no Person, who has any just Claim to *Reward* founded upon either Covenant, shall want it.

6. To clear the *Glory* of GOD's *Righteousness* further, he specifies the *Reward*, viz. *Eternal Life*, a Reward sufficient to compensate any Losses they have been at, evidence GOD's Love to Holiness and his Regard unto his Promises.

7. He, in like Manner, clears the Matter further, by giving a Description *v.* 8. of the Persons, who are to be condemn'd, which evinces the apparent Righteousness of the Sentence to be pass'd against them. They are such, against whom it will be made evident, That they have been *Contentious*, that is, That they have oppos'd and suppress'd the Truths they knew, stifl'd Convictions and *detain'd them in Unrighteousness*: Such as have not *obey'd the Truth*, or walk'd up to their Knowledge, but have obey'd *Unrighteousness*, following the Inclinations of their corrupt Hearts. As if the Apostle had said, The Persons who are to be rewarded are of a Character, that ye can lay no Manner of Claim to, but your Character is perfectly that of those, who are to be condemn'd.

8. He specifies the Punishment, *Indignation and Wrath.*

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9. To fix the Truth and Importance of this deeper upon their Minds, he repeats and enlarges upon this Aſſertion, *v.* 9, 10. thereby aſſuring them that the Matter is infallibly certain, and to give a further Evidence of the *Righteouſneſs of GOD*, he adjects a Clauſe and repeats it twice over, *viz. Firſt to the Jew and alſo to the Gentile*, wherein he ſhews the *Impartiality* of GOD's Proceedings. He will not ſuffer *one Soul*, who has any juſt Claim to *Reward*, to go *unrewarded*, be he *Jew* or *Gentile*. He will not allow *one Sinner*, to whom *Puniſhment* belongs, to eſcape *unpuniſh'd*. The *Jews* Privileges *ſhall not ſave them*, if guilty, but Judgment ſhall begin firſt at the Houſe of GOD; nor ſhall the bare Want of Privileges prejudge the *Gentiles*.

10. To confirm this, he adduces an Argument from the *Nature of GOD*, *v.* 11. *viz.* That with him there's *no Reſpect of Perſons*, that is, no unjuſt Partiality toward Perſons, upon Conſiderations, that do not belong unto the *Rule*, whereby the Cauſe is to be try'd.

11. To ſtrengthen this and obviate Objections, *v.* 12. he aſſerts, That GOD will proceed impartially in judging them according to the moſt unexceptionable Rule. He will condemn the *Jews* for their Tranſgreſſions of that *Law*, which he gave to them. He will condemn the *Gentiles*, not for the Tranſgreſſion of the *written Law*, which they had not, but for their *Sins* againſt the *Law of Nature*, which they had. And ſo neither of them ſhall have Ground to except againſt the *Rule*, according to which GOD proceeds with them.

12. Hence he takes Occaſion, *v.* 13. to repel an Objection or Plea of the *Jews*, who might fancy that they ſhould not be *puniſh'd* or *periſh*, to whom GOD had given the Privilege of the *written Law*. To cut off this Plea he tells them, That where Perſons expect Juſtification by the *Law*, it's not the *Knowledge* of the *Law*, or *hearing* of it, but *Obedience* to it that will be ſuſtain'd. Here he does not ſuppoſe that any ſhall be juſtify'd by *doing the Law*; nay, he proves the contrary. It is manifeſtly his Deſign, in the whole Diſcourſe, to do ſo: But he ſhews, That the Plea of the *Jews*, that they had the *Law*, is *inſufficient*, as if he had ſaid, Be it granted, That Juſtification is to be had by the Law; yet, even upon that Suppoſition, ye have no Title to it, unleſs ye perfectly obey it. The Law pleads for none, but thoſe who do ſo. And ſince none of you do thus obey it, as ſhall be evinc'd anon, ye muſt periſh, as I ſaid, *v.* 12.

13. Whereas the *Gentiles* might plead, It would be hard Treatment if they should be *condemn'd*, since they were *without the Law*; he demonstrates, That they could not except against their own Condemnation, upon this Ground, because albeit they wanted the *written Law*, yet they had *another Law*, *viz.* That of *Nature*; for the Breaches of which they might justly be condemn'd. that they had such a *Law* he proves against them, *v.* 14, 15. *First* from their *Practice*: He tells them that by the Guidance of *meer Nature* they did the *Works of the Law*, that is, They perform'd the material Part of some of the Duties which the *Law* enjoins, and thereby evidenc'd Acquaintance with the *Law*, or as he words it, *They shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts*, that is, the Remainders of their *natural Light*, or *Reason*, performs the *work of the Law* commanding Duty, and forbidding Sin. *Secondly*, He proves, That they have such a *Law* from the *Working* of their *Conscience*. He whose Conscience accuses him for not doing some Things, and approves him for doing other Things, knows that he was oblig'd to do the one and omit the other, and consequently has some Knowledge of the *Law*. This is the Apostle's Scope, *v.* 14, 15. So that *For*, in the Beginning of *v.* 14. refers to and renders a Reason of the first Clause of *v.* 12. That they who had *sinn'd without the Law*, *viz.* the *written Law*, *shall perish without the Law*, that is, not for violating the *written Law*, which they had not.

14. Having remov'd these Objections, he concludes his Account of the *last Judgment*, *v.* 16. wherein he gives them an Account to whom it belongs *originally* to judge, it's *GOD*. 2*ly*, Who the Person is to whom the visible Administration is committed, it's *Jesus Christ*. 3*ly*, What the Matter of that Judgment is, or what will be judg'd, it's the *Secrets of Hearts*. Albeit *Works* will be insisted upon as *Evidences* for the Conviction of Onlookers of the *Righteousness of GOD*, in his Distribution of *Rewards* and *Punishments*; yet the *Secrets of Men* will also be propal'd, for the further Confusion of Sinners, and Justification of the Severity of GOD against them.

II. Now the Apostle having proven, That the *Gentiles* are all under *Condemnation*, and so cannot be justify'd by *any Works* they can do; and having likewise remov'd some Exceptions of the *Jews* that fell in his Way, he proceeds next directly to prove the same against the *Jews* in particular, and answers their Objections from Chap. 2. Vers. 17. to Chap. 3. Vers. 8. *inclusive*.

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To prove his Charge against the *Jews*, he makes use only of one Argument, which yet is capable of bearing the Weight of many Conclusions or Inferences. To understand this, we must take notice, That the Apostle here is dealing with *those Jews*, who sought to be *justify'd* by *Works*. And,

1. By Way of Concession, he grants them several Privileges above the *Gentiles* from Verse 17. to Verse 20. *inclusive*, viz. That they were *call'd Jews*; that they had *the Law*, on which they rested, and pretended some *peculiar Interest* in GOD, as being externally in Covenant with him, Verse 17. of which they *boasted*; That they had some Knowledge of the *Law*, and pretended themselves capable of guiding others. This he grants them in a Variety of Expressions, Vers. 18, 19, 20. By which the Apostle secretly taxes their Vanity, and insinuates, That whatever they had in Point of Privilege, they abus'd it.

2. The Apostle charges them with a practical Contradiction to this their Knowledge, and this he makes good against them, particularly against their highest Pretenders, their Teachers, 1. By condescending on several Instances, wherein they were guilty and appealing to their Consciences for the Truth of them, Verses 22, 23. which I shall not insist in explaining. 2. He proves it further by a Testimony of Scripture, Verse 24. wherein GOD complains, That their Provocations were such, as tempted the *Gentiles* to *blaspheme his Name*.

This is the Argument, the Conclusion he leaves to themselves to draw. And indeed it will bear all the Conclusions formerly laid down against the *Gentiles*. Whatever their Knowledge was, they were not *Doers*, but *Breakers* of the *Law*, and so could not be *justify'd* by it, Verse 13. but might expect to *perish* for their Transgressions of it, according to Verse 12. They sinn'd against Knowledge, and so deserv'd as severe Resentments as the *Gentiles*, Chap. 1. Verse 32. They could not pretend *Ignorance*; for they taught others the Contrair and so were without Excuse, Chap. 2. Verse 1.

The Apostle next proceeds to answer their Objections. The first whereof is brought in, Verse 25. The Short of it is this, The *Jews* pretended they had *Circumcision*, the Seal of GOD's Covenant, and so claim'd the Privileges of it. This Objection is not directly propos'd, but the Answer anticipating it is introduc'd as a Confirmation or Reason enforcing the Conclusion aim'd at, *viz.* That they could not be justify'd by the *Law:* And therefore it is, that we find the causal Particle *For* in the Beginning of the Verse. This much for the

Manner, wherein the Objection is introduc'd. To this Objection the Apostle answers,

1. By a Concession, *Circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the Law*, that is, if thou perfectly obey the Commands, then thou mayst in Justice demand the Privileges of the Covenant, and plead the Seal of it, as a Pledge of the Faithfulness of GOD in the Promises.

2. He answers directly by shewing, That this Seal signify'd just Nothing as to their Claim of a *regal* Righteousness, because they were *Breakers of the Law. But if thou be a Breaker of the Law, thy Circumcision is made Uncircumcision.* The Short of the Matter is this; This Seal is only a conditional Ingagement of the Faithfulness of GOD: It does not say, Thou shall get the Privileges whether thou perform the Condition or not: So that by this Means, if the Condition is not perform'd, ye have Nothing to ask, and ye are as remote from a Claim to the *Reward*, as they who want the *Seal.*

3. The Apostle, to illustrate and confirm what he had said about the Unprofitableness of *Circumcision* in Case of Transgression, shews, That a *Gentile*, upon Supposition that it were possible, obeying the *Law*, but wanting the *Seal* of the *Covenant*, would have a better Title to the Privileges promis'd, than a *Jew*, who had the *Seal*, but wanted the *Obedience*, Verse 26. *Therefore if the Uncircumcision keep the Righteousness of the Law*, that is, If a *Gentile* should yield *that Obedience* the *Law* requires, *shall not his Uncircumcision be counted for Circumcision?* That is, Shall not he, notwithstanding he wanteth the *outward Sign* of *Circumcision*, be allow'd to plead an Interest in the *Blessings* promis'd to *Obedience*, and to insist upon the *Faithfulness* of GOD for the Performance of the Promises made to the Obedient, of which *Circumcision* is the Sign? The Reason of this is plain, Circumcision seals the Performance of Promise to the Obedient, the *Gentile* obeying has that, which is the Ground whereon the *Faithfulness* of GOD is ingag'd to perform the *Promise*, viz. *Obedience*, and so a real Title to the *Thing promis'd*, tho' he want the *outward Sign*: Whereas the *disobeying Jew* has only the *Seal*, which secures nothing, but upon the Condition of *that Obedience*, which he has not yielded. This is only spoken by Way of Supposition, not as if any of the *Gentiles* had yielded *such Obedience*: For he has plainly proven the Contrary before. Plainly the Apostle's Reason is this, *Circumcision* is an Ingagement for the Performance of the *Promise* to the *Obedient*. The *disobedient Jew* has therefore no Title to the *Promise*; whereas the *Gentile* that obeys, having

having that *Obedience*, to which the *Promiſe* is made, has a *real Right* to it, and ſo might expect the Performance of it, as if he had the *outward Seal.*

4. To clear yet further the *Unprofitableneſs* of *Circumciſion* without *Obedience*, the Apoſtle, upon the foreſaid Suppoſition, ſhews, That the *Gentile* obeying wou'd not only have the better Title; but his *Obedience* wou'd ſignally contribute to the clearing of the *Juſtice* of GOD, in condemning the *diſobedient Jew*, Verſe 27. *And ſhall not Uncircumciſion which is by Nature, if it fulfill the Law, judge thee, who by the Letter and Circumciſion doeſt tranſgreſs the Law*, that is, if a *Gentile* wanting *Circumciſion* and the Security thereby given, with the other Advantages which the *Jews* have, diſcover the *Inexcuſableneſs* of your *Diſobedience*, who have the *Letter* and *Circumciſion* or the *written Law*, *id eſt*, who have a *clearer Rule* of Duty and a *plainer Promiſe.*

5. To remove quite the Foundation of this Objection, the Apoſtle clears the real Deſign of *Circumciſion*, and the Character of the Perſon to whom the Advantages do belong, Verſe 28. 29. wherein he ſhews *negatively*, That the *Jew* to whom the Promiſes do belong, is not every one who belongs to that Nation, or is outwardly a *Jew*: And that the *Circumciſion*, to which the Promiſes are *abſolutely* made, is not the *outward Circumciſion*, which is *in the Fleſh*, Verſe 28. but *poſitively*, That the *Jew*, to whom the promis'd Bleſſings belong, is he who is a *Jew inwardly*, that is, who has that inward Frame of Heart which GOD requires of his People; and the *Circumciſion*, to which Bleſſings are abſolutely promis'd, is that *inward Renovation* of Heart which is the *Principle* of the *Obedience* requir'd by, and accepted of GOD, Verſe 29.

This Objection being remov'd out of the Way, the Apoſtle proceeds to anſwer an Inſtance againſt what he has now ſaid in the three or four firſt Verſes of the 3d Chap. The Objection is propos'd Verſe 1. and is in ſhort this, By your Reaſoning, wou'd the *Jews* ſay, we have no *Advantage* beyond the *Gentiles*, and *Circumciſion* is utterly unprofitable. To this he anſwers,

1. By denying flatly what is aſſerted in the Objection, declaring, That notwithſtanding of all this, the *Jews* had every Way the *Advantage.*

2. Leſt this ſhould appear a vain Aſſertion, he clears it by an Inſtance of the higheſt Conſequence, *viz.* That they had *the Oracles of GOD*, which the *Gentiles* wanted, wherein that Relief againſt Tranſgreſſions, which the *Gentiles* were Strangers to, is reveal'd, as he expreſly

presly teaches afterwards, Verse 21. As if the Apostle had said, Tho' ye *Jews* fail of *Obedience*, and so are cut off from *Justification* by the *Law* as a *Covenant of Works*; yet ye have a *Righteousness reveal'd* to you in the *Law* and the *Prophets*, Verse 21. to which the Sinner may betake himself for Relief; this the *Gentiles* who want *the Law and the Prophets* know Nothing of.

3. He clears, That this is a great Advantage, notwithstanding that many of the *Jews* were not the better for it, Verse 3. thus at once anticipating an Objection that might be mov'd, and confirming what he had said. *What if some did not believe*, that is, tho' some have fallen short of the Advantages of this *Revelation*, shall we therefore say it was not in it self a *Privilege*? Nay, it is in it self a *Privilege*, and they by their own Fault in not believing, have forfeited the Advantage of it *to themselves only*; *for shall their Unbelief make the Faith of GOD without Effect*? That is, Assuredly Believers will not be the worse dealt with for the *Unbelief of others*; but they will obtain the Advantage of the Promises.

We have insisted much longer upon this Context than was design'd, but we hope that they who consider that the Apostle s Arguments and his whole Purposes, are directly levell'd at that which is the main Scope of these Papers, will not reckon this a faulty Digression. And besides, we shall immediately see the Usefulness of this, in Order to remove the Foundation of a great many Objections drawn from this Context by Mr. *Humfrey*; some of whose Notions we shall consider after we have remov'd one Objection more, and it is this:

VII. The Words of the Apostle *Paul* to the *Athenians*, *Acts* 17. 27. are made use of to this Purpose. The Apostle tells them in the preceeding Words, That the GOD whom he preach'd, was he who *made the Worlds, hath made of one Blood all Nations of Men, for to dwell on all the Face of the Earth, and hath determin'd the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of their Habitation*; *that they should seek the LORD, if happily they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live and move and have our Being.* The Sum of what is pleaded from this Testimony amounts to this, That Men left to the *Light of Nature* are in Duty *bound to seek the LORD*; *that GOD is not so far from them*, but he may be found; and that if they will *feel* after him, that is, trace these dark Discoveries of him, in the Works of *Creation* and *Providence*, they may *happily find him.*

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For answer to this we say, 1. No Word is here to be stretched further than the Occasion and Scope of the Apostle requires and allows. 2. The Occasion of this Discourse was, That *Paul* being at *Athens*, saw that City set upon the *Worship* of *Idols*, and overlook the *One true GOD*, which mov'd him with Wrath, and gave Occasion to this Discourse: The evident Scope whereof is to shew, That they were to blame, that they overlook'd the *true GOD*, and gave that *Worship* to *Idols*, which was only to be given to *GOD*. For convincing them of this, 3. He clears, That the *true GOD*, by his Works of *Creation* and *Providence* had in so far discovered himself, that if by these Works they sought after the Knowledge of him, they might find him so far, or know so much, as to understand that he alone was the *true GOD*, to whom *divine Worship* was *due*. 4. He owns, That indeed *these Discoveries* were but *dark*, to wit, in Comparison of the *Discoveries* he had made of himself in the *Word*; which is sufficiently intimated by that Expression of *feeling after him*, they might *find him*, so far as to deliver them from that *gross Idolatry* and *Neglect* of him they were involv'd in. Here is all that the Scope holds out: But he does not say, That they might *find him, so as to obtain the saving Knowledge of him by those Works of Providence*: But on the contrary he tells, *That GOD winked at the Times of Ignorance*, that is, seem'd as if he did not notice Men, and in his holy and soveraign Justice left them to find by their own Experience, which by any Means they had, that they could not arrive to the saving Knowledge of GOD; tho' they might, as has been just now said, have gone so far as to disintangle themselves from that gross *Idolatry* for which he now reprov'd them. He does not say, That GOD then *called* them to *saving Repentance*, gave them any Discovery of his *Purpose of Mercy*, and thereon invited them to *Peace* and *Acceptance*: But on the contrary, he tells, *That* now *he calls all Men every where to repent*, Verse 30. which sufficiently intimates that they had not that *Call* before. In a Word, 'tis not that *seeking* or *finding of GOD*, or that *Nearness* to GOD which is here intended, that elsewhere the Scripture speaks of, when it treats about Mens Case who are living under the *Gospel*, and have *GOD in Christ reveal'd*, and the *Gospel Call* to turn to, *seek after* and *find him* to their own Salvation; as the Scope of the Place fully clears. Any one that would see this Place fully considered, may find it done by the learn'd Dr. *Owen*, in that accurate, tho' short Digression concerning *universal Grace*, insert in his *Theolog. Pantodap. Pag.* 33. There likewise is that other Scripture

ture, *Acts* 14. v. 15, 16, 17. largely considered. On which I shall not now insist, seing there is Nothing in it that has the least Appearance of Opposition to what we have asserted, if not that GOD is there said, *not to have left himself without Witness* among the Nations, in as much as he *did good to them, gave them fruitful Seasons*, &c. This is all granted; but these Necessaries of Life are no Witness that GOD design'd for them *Mercy* and *Forgiveness*, as has been made appear above, and as the Spirit of GOD tells us there; for GOD *suffered them to walk in their own Ways.*

VIII. Some alledge, That there is *a Law of Grace connatural* to Man in his *lapsed State*, and that in Substance it is this, *That GOD will pardon Sinners upon their Repentance*: And they tell us, That this *Law of Grace* is as much written in the Heart of *lapsed Man*, as the *Law of Nature* was writ in the Heart of *innocent Man*. To this Purpose speaks Mr. *Humfrey* in his *Peaceable Disquisitions*, and that with such an Air of Confidence, as might make one expect better Proof than he has offer'd.

Peace. Disquis. Ch. 4. *Pag.* 56.

We shall just now examine Mr. *Humfrey*'s Arguments. As to the Notion it self of a *connatural Law of Grace written in the Hearts of all Mankind in this lapsed Condition*, we look upon it as absolutely false. It contradicts *Scripture*, *Reason* and *Experience*. My Design excuseth me from the Use of Scripture Arguments. *Experience* I need not insist upon, after what has been already said. *Reason* will not allow us to call any *Law connatural* to Man, save upon on of these three Accounts; either, because we are born with *actual Knowledge* of it; or, because it lies *so open* and is *so suited* to our *rational Faculties*, that any Man, who has the Use of Reason, can scarce miss thinking of it, or, at least, refuse his Assent to it, when it's propos'd to him; or finally because it's *nearly connected* with Notions and Principles that are *self-evident*, and is easily deducible from them. Now this Discovery of *Mercy* to Sinners meerly upon *Repentance* is *connatural* in none of these Senses. I know no Truth that is *connatural* in the *first* Sense. The ingenious Mr. *Lock* has said enough against this. In the *second* Sense, it is not *connatural*. Who will tell me, That this is a *self-evident Proposition*, while so great a Part of the more knowing and judicious Part of Mankind, not only refuse their Assent to it, but reject it as a plain Untruth? Yea, I doubt if any Man that understands the Case,

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Caſe, and knows Nothing of the *Satisfaction of Chriſt*, will give his Aſſent to it. In the laſt *Senſe* it is not *Connatural*; for if it were ſo, it were eaſily demonſtrable by theſe *ſelf-evident Principles*, to which it is nearly alli'd: Which when Mr. *Humfrey* ſhall have demonſtrated from theſe Principles, or any other for him, we ſhall then conſider it; but this I am apprehenſive will never be done. In a Word, all theſe Truths, which with any tolerable Propriety of Speech can be call'd *connatural*, if they are not *ſelf-evident*, are yet ſuch, as admit of an eaſy Demonſtration. And it is fooliſh to call any Truth *connatural*, unleſs it is ſuch, as either needs no Proof, or is eaſily demonſtrable. This is ſufficient to overthrow this Notion.

Before we conſider the Arguments which Mr. *Humfrey* advances for his Opinions, I ſhall offer to the *Reader* a more full View of it in his own Words. He then aſſerts, " That there is a *connatural Law of* " *Grace* written in the Heart of Man, that is,
" That this *Law* of lapſed Nature, this *Law of* *Peace. Diſquiſ. Ch.*
" *Grace*, or *remedying Law*, is written in the 4. *Pag.* 56, 57.
" Heart of Man in Regard of his fallen Nature,
" no leſs than the *Law of pure Nature* it ſelf was. The *Law of Nature*,
" ſays he, as I take it, is the *Dictates of right Reaſon, declaring to us*
" *our Duty to GOD, to our ſelves and to our Neighbours*; and the *Light*
" of the ſame *Reaſon* will dictate to us, when we have *fail'd* in that
" Duty, to *repent* and *turn* to GOD with truſting to his *Mercy* and
" *Pardon* if we do ſo, and not elſe. We do find it legible in our Hearts,
" That GOD is *Good* and *wiſely Gracious* to conſider our loſt
" Eſtate, and pity our Infirmities and neceſſary Frailty. After he has told us of a *threefold Promulgation* of this *Law of Grace*, under the *Patriarchs*, by *Moſes* and *Chriſt*, which he calls *three Editions of the ſame Law*; he ſubjoins, " Now I ſay, That tho' the Heathen be not under
" (or have not) *this Law of Grace*, in the *third* and *laſt* ſetting out,
" or in the State under the *Goſpel*; yet they are under it (or have
" it) in the State of the Ancients, or as they had it in the *firſt Pro-*
" *mulgation*; and upon Suppoſition that any of them do, according to
" the *Light* they have, live up in Sincerity to *this Law*, I dare not be
" the Man that ſhall deny, but through the Grace of our Lord Jeſus
" Chriſt (procuring this *Law* or *Covenant* for them, as for us and all
" the World) they ſhall be *ſaved* even as we. And a little before he ſays, " Theſe Characters thus engraven in the Heart of Man, is the

" same *Law of Grace* in its *practical Contents*, which is more largely " paraphras'd upon in the *Scriptures*.

Surely the Apostle *Paul* had a very different Notion of the State of the Heathen World from this Gentleman, when he tells us emphatically, *That they are Strangers from the Covenants of Promise*, that *they are without GOD*, that is, without the saving Knowledge of GOD; for another Sense the Word will scarce bear; that *they are without Christ, without Hope, afar off*, &c. But its not my Design to offer Scripture Arguments against this Anti-scriptural Divinity. I leave this to others, and proceed to his Proof: Nor shall I in the Consideration of them take Notice of every Thing that might be justly quarrell'd; but only hint at the main Faults.

I. He reasons to this Effect, If there is no *connatural Law of Grace* written in the Heart of Man, then none of those who liv'd before *Moses* could be saved, in as much as there was then no *other Law* by which they could be saved.

Ibid. Pag. 56.

This Argument he borrows from *Suarez*, and concludes it triumphantly thus, " Which is a Truth so evident, as " makes the Proof of that *Law*, by that Reason alone to be good.

But for all this Commendation, I think this Argument has a double Fault. 1. It proves not the Point, *viz.* That there is *a Law of Grace* written in the Hearts of *all Men* by Nature; but only that there was such a *Law* written in their Hearts who were sav'd. 2. This Argument is built upon a Supposition that's plainly false, *viz.* That there was no other Way that they could be saved, but by the *Law of Grace* written in their Hearts. This, I say, is false; for they were saved by the *Gospel Discovery of Christ* in the *Promise reveal'd* to them by GOD; and wherein the Generality of the LORD's People were more fully instructed by the *Patriarchs*, who were *Preachers of Righteousness*. And this *Revelation* and *Preaching* was to them instead of the *written Word*. Thus we see this mighty Argument proves just Nothing.

II. He reasons from *Abraham*'s pleading with GOD on Behalf of the righteous Men in *Sodom*. Here he thinks it evident, That there were righteous Men. He proves, That there were none righteous then, according to the *Tenor* of the *Covenant of Works*, and therefore concludes, That these righteous Persons did belong to, and were dealt with and according to the *Covenant of Grace*. But now what does all this prove? Does it prove that these Men were under the *Covenant of Grace*, and

Ibid. Pag. 60.

that

that they were dealt with according to the *Tenor* of it? Well, I grant it. But what will he infer from this, That therefore *all the World* were under the *Covenant of Grace*, or shall be dealt with according to it's Tenor? I would have thought that one who has read *Suarez*, might know that this Conclusion will not follow. If there had been any righteous Men in *Sodom*, it's true they were under the *Covenant of Grace*; and I add, If there be any such in the World, they are under it; therefore all the World are so? Who sees not that this will not follow? Again, Supposing, That there were righteous Men in *Sodom*, how will Mr. *Humfrey* prove, That they had no other *Rule of their Life*, or *Ground of their Hope*, but his *connatural Law of Grace*? Why might they not have *Revelation*? Was not *Abraham*, to whom GOD reveal'd himself, and made so many gracious Promises, well known to some in *Sodom*? Might not the Fame of such a Person so near, easily reach them? Was not he the Deliverer of *Sodom* some eighteen Years before, and did not *Lot* his Friend, who was well acquaint with the *Revelations* made to *Abraham*, live in *Sodom*?

III. Mr. *Humfery* tells us, That the *Law of Grace* was in *Adam*'s and *Noah's Time* publish'd to all the World, and that it never was repeal'd, and therefore all the World are still under it, and so in a *Capacity of Salvation*. *Ibid. Pag.* 62.

But 1. This, were it granted, will not prove Mr. *Humfrey*'s *connatural Law of Grace*. The Gospel is reveal'd to all the Inhabitants of *England*; therefore the *Law of Grace is written* in all their Hearts: He must know very little of many People in *England*, who will admit the Consequence. 2. Nor will it prove, That all the World are under the *Gospel Revelation*, even in its first Edition, to use Mr. *Humfrey*'s Words. Suppose GOD once reveal'd to the World, when it was compriz'd in the Family of *Noah*, *the Covenant of Grace*, and so all this little World had the *external Revelation*: Will Mr. *Humfery* hence infer, That all the Descendants of *Noah*, after so long a Tract of Time, in so many different Nations, have still the *same Revelation*? If he do, the Consequence is nought. It is as sure as any Thing can be, That very quickly most of the Descendants of Noah lost in so far *that Revelation*, or at least, corrupted it with their *vain Additions* to that Degree, that it cou'd be of Advantage to no Man. 3. Nor will what Mr. *Humfrey* talks of *his Repeal* help out his Argument. To deprive a People of the Advantage of an *external Revelation*, there is no need of a *formal*

Repeal by a publish'd Statute; it is enough that Men by their *Wickedness* lose all Remembrance of it, and suffer it to fall into Desuetude, and GOD sees not meet to renew the *Revelation* to them or their Posterity.

Ibid. Pag. 62.

IV. Mr. *Humfrey* will prove his Point by a *Syllogism*, and it runs thus, *The Doers of the Law are justify'd, Rom. 2. Ver. 13.* But *the Gentiles are Doers of the Law*; *Ergo*, some of the Gentiles are *justify'd before GOD.*

The Conclusion of this Argument is the direct *Antithesis* of that Position, which the Apostle makes it his Business in that whole Context to prove, as is evident from the Account already given of that Context. This is pretty bold. But let us see how he proves his *Minor*. This he pretends to do from *Rom. 2. 14.* Where it's said, That *the Gentiles do by Nature the Things contain'd in the Law*; and so are *Doers of the Law*, and consequently shall be *justify'd.*

Well, Is this the Way that this Gentleman interprets *Scripture* upon other Occasions? I hope not. He has no Regard to the *Scope* or *Design* of the Apostle's Discourse. All that the Apostle says here, is, That the *Gentiles* are in so far *Doers of the Law*, that their Doing is Proof that they have *some Knowledge* of it. The Persons who here are said to be *Doers of the Law*, are the very same Persons of whom the Apostle says, Verse 12. That they *shall perish without the Law.* But we have fully clear'd this Context before, and thither I refer the Reader.

But Mr. *Humfrey* reforms his Argument, and makes it run thus, He who *sincerely keeps the Law*, shall be *justify'd* according to that of our LORD, *Keep the Commandments, if thou wilt enter into eternal Life*; and that of the Apostle, *GOD will render eternal Life to every one that patiently continues in well-doing*: But subsumes he, Some Gentiles *keep the Law sincerely*: And therefore 'tis according to the Gospel, which requires not the *Rigour*, but accepts of *sincere Obedience.*

As to our Author's Major, if the Meaning of it be, That we shall be *justify'd before GOD* for, or upon *our sincere Obedience*, according to the *Gospel*, I crave Leave to differ from him; nor will the Scriptures adduc'd by him prove it in this Sense. The *First* is a Reference of a young Man *to the Covenant of Works*, who was not seeking *Salvation*, but *eternal Life* by *Doing*, in Order to discover to him his *own Inability* and

and his *need* of Chriſt. But as to this Commentators may be conſulted. The *other Text* I have clear'd above.

His *Minor* I flatly deny: Well, but our Author will prove it by a new Syllogiſm, which runs thus, He who yields *ſuch Obedience* as the *Jews*, who are circumcis'd in Heart, do, yields that *ſincere Obedience*, upon which the *Goſpel* accepts and juſtifies Men: But the *Gentiles*, or ſome of them yield *ſuch Obedience*.

I have already entred my Diſſent againſt the laſt Clauſe of the *Major*, viz. *That the Goſpel juſtifies Men on ſincere Obedience*; but it's not my Deſign to debate the Point of *Juſtification* with our Author at this Time, and ſo I let this Propoſition paſs: Yet I again deny the *Minor*, which our Author eſſays to prove thus, That ſome of the *Gentiles* do *obey* in *that Senſe*, in which the *Jews*, who are circumcis'd *inwardly* or in *Heart*, do obey: This he pretends to demonſtrate from the Apoſtle's Words, *Rom.* 2. 26, 27. *Therefore if the Uncircumciſion keep the Righteouſneſs of the Law*, &c. *and ſhall not Uncircumciſion, which is by Nature, if it fulfill the Law*. &c.

But where will our Author find the Proof of his *Minor* in theſe Words? There is nothing like it, unleſs he take the Antecedent of a hypothetick Propoſition, for a plain Aſſertion. But this Antecedent needs not be allow'd poſſible, and yet the Apoſtle's Words and his Aſſertion would hold good, and all that he aims at be reach'd. Every one knows, That in ſuch Propoſitions, it's only the *Connexion* that is aſſerted. As for the Meaning of the Text, I have ſhew'd before that it is not for our Author's Purpoſe.

V. But our Author has another Argument, which he thinks is clearer than all the reſt, and *profeſſes himſelf perfectly ſtriken with the Evidence of it, as with a Beam of Light never to be withſtood, or any more to be doubted.* Well this mighty Argument runs thus, " If this was the " *chief Advantage* the *Jew* had over the *Gentile*, That one had the " *Oracles of GOD*, and the other had not, then was there not this " Difference between them, That one is only in a *State of Nature*, and " the other in a *State of Grace*; or that one was in a *Capacity*, and the " other under an *Impoſſibility* of Salvation. For this were an Advantage " of a far greater Nature. But this was the chief Advantage, *Rom.* " 3. 2. *Chiefly becauſe to them were committed the Oracles of GOD*; Ergo. *Ibid.* Pag. 63, 64.

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I must confess, That I am not striken with so much Evidence upon the Proposal of this Argument, as it seems our Author was. To me this Argument appears a plain Sophism. That the *Jews* had the *Oracles of GOD*, was a greater Advantage, than our Author seems to think it. And while the Apostle calls it the *chief Advantage* of the *Jews* above the *Gentiles*, that they had the *Oracles of GOD*, how will our Author infer from this, That they were upon an equal Foot as to the Means *absolutely necessary* for Salvation; or which is the same, as to a *Capacity* of Salvation; for certainly he that wants the Means *absolutely necessary* to Salvation is not *capable* of Salvation, in that Sense that belongs to our Purpose? For my Part I would draw the quite contrary Conclusion from it; thus, the *Jews* had this Privilege above the *Gentiles*, That they had the *Oracles of GOD* intrusted with them, wherein the only Way of Salvation is reveal'd, *being witness'd to by the Law and the Prophets*, Rom. 3. 21. and therefore had Access to Salvation: Whereas on the other Hand, the *Gentiles* wanting *divine Revelation*, which *alone* can discover that *Righteousness*, whereby a *Sinner* can be *justify'd*, did want the Means *absolutely necessary* to Salvation, and so were not in a *Capacity* of Salvation. Now where is our Author's boasted of Demonstration? The Occasion of his Mistake is this, he once inadvertently suppos'd, That these two Advantages, *divine Revelation* and *Access to Salvation* were quite different, and that the one was not included in the other. But of this enough.

Mr. *Humfrey*, I know, may say, They had the *Law of Grace in their Hearts*. But that is the Question. Our Author asserts this; but he does so without Book. We have all this While been seeking Proof of this: Hitherto we have meet with none. We have meet with some Scriptures interpreted or wrested into a Sense plainly inconsistent with the *Scope* and Intendment, without any Regard had to the *Context* and Drift of the Discourse, which is no safe Way of managing Scriptures.

Next, He insists upon the Story of the *Ninevites Repentance*. They were *without the Church*; it was a *Law of Grace* which led them to *repent*. But had not the *Ninevites divine Revelation*? Did they not *repent at the preaching of* Jonah? How will our Author prove that *Jonah* never drop'd a Word, and that there was a Possibility of stopping the Progress of the Controversy by their turning from their evil Courses? Did not *Jonah* apprehend, That the Event would be a

further

further Forbearance? But may be some may say, *Jonah* had no Mind they should be spar'd, and therefore would not drop any Incouragement: But we know it was not of Choice that he went there; and as he went there in Obedience to GOD, so no Doubt, he who had been so sharply disciplin'd for Disobedience, would speak what the LORD commanded him. Again, had they Assurance of Pardon or eternal Salvation upon their *Repentance?* Was it *Gospel-repentance?* Or did it reach further than a *Forbearance* of temporal Judgments?

Well, but the Instance of *Cornelius* seems more pat to his Purpose. He was a *Gentile*, was *accepted* with GOD; and *Peter* tells, That *in every Nation he that fears GOD and works Righteousness, is accepted.* But who will assure me that *Cornelius* was a *Stranger* to the *Scriptures?* Did he not know them? Did he not believe them? How could that be? It's plain he was a Proselyte and imbrac'd the *Jews Religion* as to its Substance, and that he did believe, since he *pleas'd GOD* and was accepted. Now we know, that *without Faith it is impossible to please GOD.* What wanted he then? Why he wanted to be inform'd that the *Messiah promis'd* was *come*, and that *Christ Jesus* was *He.* As to what the Apostle says of GOD's *Acceptance of Persons of all Nations*, any one that will give himself the Trouble of considering his Scope, and the Circumstances of the Place, will see, That it is nothing else but a Comment upon the Design of *the Vision* he got to instruct him, That now GOD was to admit Persons of all Nations, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, to a Participation of the *Covenant Blessings.*

DIGRESSION

DIGRESSION.

A short Digression concerning GOD's Government of the Heathen World, occasion'd by the foregoing Objections, wherein an Attempt is made to account for the Occurrencies that have the most favourable Aspect to them, without supposing any Intendment or Design of their Salvation, which is adjected as an Appendix to the Answers given to Mr. Humfrey's *Objections, wherein it is made evident, That there is no need to suppose the* Heathens *under a* Law *or* Government of Grace.

IF I should here stop, the Persons, with whom I have to do, might possibly alledge, That the main Strength of *their Cause* remains untouch'd, and the most straitning Difficulty that presses *ours* is not notic'd. The Short of the Matter is, They enquire, *What Government are the Heathen World under?* They conceive it must be allow'd a *Government of Grace*, since they are not dealt by according to the *Demerit* of their *Sins*. Possibly we might propose some Questions that would be no less hard to satisfy by those who talk of an *universal Law of Grace:* But this would not remove the Difficulty, tho' it might embarrass the Opposers of our Sentiments. I shall therefore open my Mind in this Matter, and offer what occurs on this Head. If I mistake, it will plead somewhat for me, That the Subject, so far as I know, is not usually spoken of by others, and I have not of Choice meddled with it, but was led to it by my Subject, that requires some Consideration of it. If we state right Thoughts in this Matter, it will give Light to many Things, that otherwise are dark. What I have to say, I shall propose in the subsequent Gradation.

I. Man was originally made under a *Law* that is *holy, good, righteous, equal* and *just:* This *Law* exacted of all subjected to it *exact, punctual* and *perfect Obedience*; and for its Preservation it was arm'd with a *penal*

penal Sanction, anſwerable to the high and tender Regard, which the infinitely Holy, Wiſe and Great GOD had for the Honour of that *Law*, that was the *Declaration of his Will*, bare the Impreſs of his *Authority* and *Repreſentation* of all his *moral Excellencies*. And beſides all this, he alſo propos'd a *Reward*, ſuitable to his *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs*, for which his *Faithfulneſs* became Pledge. It is not needful to lanch out in Proof of the ſeveral Branches of this Aſſertion. That Man was made under a *Law*, is queſtion'd by none, but *Atheiſts*; and they have their Mouths ſufficiently ſtopp'd of old and late by many Perſons of Worth and Learning. That this *Law* is *holy*, *juſt* and *good*, cannot without notable Injury to the *Deity*, be deny'd. That it exacted *perfect Obedience*, is ſo evident, that no Perſon, who thinks what he ſays, can deny it. A *Law* not requiring *perfect Obedience* to its own Precepts, is a *Law* not requiring, what it requires, which is plain Nonſenſe. A *poſterior Law* may not require *perfect Obedience* to a *prior*: But *every Law* requires *perfect Obedience* to it ſelf. That this *Law* was arm'd with a *penal Sanction* is evident from the *Wiſdom of the Law-giver*, who could not enact *ſuch Laws*, which he knew Men would tranſgreſs, without providing for the *Honour* of his own *Authority*. Beſides, if there is no *penal Sanction*, it is not to be expected that *Laws* could ever reach their *End*, eſpecially as Things have always ſtood with Man. But were all thoſe Proofs given up, the Effects of *vindictive Juſtice* in the World, with the Fears that Sinners are under, leſt all theſe are only the Beginning of Sorrows, ſufficiently confirm this Truth, and moreover aſſure us, that it is ſuch a Penalty as ſuits every Way the Offence in its Nature and Aggravations. But I know none of thoſe Things will be queſtion'd by thoſe, whom we have mainly under View at preſent.

II. All the Children of Men, in all Ages and in all Places of the World, have been and are guilty of Violations of *this Law*. We have heard the *Deiſts* owning this before; and *Chriſtians* will not deny it. *Deiſts* would have thought it their Intereſt to deny it: But ſince, it's unqueſtionable that the Generality offend, in Inſtances paſt reck'ning. If they had affirm'd, That any one did, in no Inſtance offend, they might have been requir'd to make good their Aſſertion: But this they could not do. They durſt not condeſcend. And therefore it muſt be own'd that the *beſt*, not in *one Inſtance*, but in *many* violate this *Law*.

III. Upon account of *these Violations* of his *holy* and *righteous Law*, all Mankind, every Individual, and every Generation of Men, that have liv'd in the World, are obnoxious to *Justice*. By those Sins they have forfeit any Claim they might have laid to the *Reward* of *perfect Obedience*, and are liable to the *Penalty* in the *Sanction* of the *Law*. And GOD might, at any Time, have righteously inflicted it, either upon any *Individual* or any *whole Race* of Men. I determine not now what that *Punishment* was. They who talk our Offences are small, and extenuate them, seem scarcely impress'd with suitable Notions of GOD. And I doubt will not be sustain'd Judges competent of the Qualities of Offences and Injuries done to his Honour. But whatever the *Punishment* is, *eternal*, or *not*, which I dispute not now, because we agree about it with those, whom we now have under Consideration, 'tis certain none can prove, That it is all confin'd to *Time*, or that any *temporal Punishment* is *sufficient* for the least Offence that is committed against GOD. And it is also clear, That, upon one's *sinning*, the Penalty might be presently inflicted, without any Injustice, provided the *penal Sanction* were suitable and just in its Constitution, as of Necessity it must be, where GOD *made the Law* and *constitute the Punishment*.

IV. Albeit GOD righteously might have cut off any Generation of Men, and sweept the Earth clean; yet has he seen meet to spare Sinners even Multitudes of them for a long Time. A Piece of Conduct truly astonishing! Especially it would appear so, if we understood how much GOD *hates Sin*. The only Reason why the *Heathen World* hath not admir'd it more, and been more extensive in their Enquiries into the Reasons of it, is, because they had but very short and imperfect Notions of GOD's *Holiness*, and the *Evil* of *Sin*. They took notice of GOD's *Forbearance* of some notorious Offenders. Some of them were stumbled at it, and some of them endeavour'd to account for it: But the Wonder of GOD's sparing a World, full of Sinners, was little notic'd, and tho' they had observ'd it, they would have quickly found themselves as much at a Loss here, as any where else. The Scriptures have not gratify'd the Curiosity of Men with such a full Account, as our vain Minds would have desir'd, that are too forward to question him particularly about his Ways, who gives an Account of none of his Matters: Yet some Reasons of this Conduct are dropp'd that may satisfy the humble. 1. GOD made a *Covenant* with *Adam*, wherein his Posterity, as well as himself were concern'd and included. They

were

were to be *Gainers* or *Loſers* as he acquit himſelf well or ill. This Tranſaction, I know, is deny'd by ſome *Chriſtians*. I ſhall not diſpute the Matter with them: Others have done it. I now take it for granted. And if they will not ſuppoſe it, it's but the Loſs of this Reaſon. And let them if they can, put a better in its Room. Upon Suppoſition, That there was ſuch a Tranſaction, and that it was juſt, as we muſt allow all to be, whereof GOD is the Author, It was not only *equal*, but in Point of Wiſdom, *apparently neceſſary*, or, at leaſt, *highly ſuitable*, That all concern'd in this Tranſaction ſhould be brought into *Being*, to reap the Fruits of it. But this was impoſſible if the World had not been ſpar'd. 2. GOD, in ſparing the World, had a *Deſign of Mercy* upon ſome. And many of them were to proceed from ſome of the worſt Sinners. He deſign'd to ſave ſome in all Ages, and in moſt Places. Their Progenitors muſt therefore, of Neceſſity, be kept alive. He bears with the provoking Carriage of evil Men; becauſe out of their Loins he intends to extract others, whom he will form for the *Glory of his Grace*. 3. GOD is patient towards Sinners, to manifeſt the *Equity* of his *future Juſtice* upon them. When Men are ſpar'd and continue in Sin, the Pleas of *Infirmity* and *Miſtake* are cut off, and they are *convict* of *Malice*. They are ſilenc'd and Onlookers ſatisfy'd, that *Severity* is juſtly exercis'd on them. *Quanto Dei magis Judicium tardum eſt, tanto magis juſtum.* As *Patience*, while it is exercis'd, is the *Silence* of his *Juſtice*; ſo when it is *abus'd*, it *ſilences* Mens Complaints againſt his *Juſtice*. Other Reaſons of this Conduct we might glean from the Scriptures: But my Deſign allows me not to inſiſt: Nor indeed do they deſcend ſo low as to ſatisfy curious *Wits*. *Lo theſe are Parts of his Ways* and Aims, *but how little a Portion is heard*, that is, even by *Revelation*, *known of him?* ſays *Job*, Chap. 26. 14.

V. The World, or Sinners in it are ſpar'd, not by a proper *Reprive*, that is, a Delay of Puniſhment, after the Offenders are taken up, queſtion'd, try'd, convicted, and ſolemnly condemn'd; the Way, Manner and Time of their Puniſhment fix'd, by a *judicial Application* of the *general Threatning* of the *Law* in this particular Caſe, by the Judge competent, and the Sentence plainly intimated; a Delay of the Execution after this, if it is of the Judge's proper Motion, if the Offender is not impriſon'd, if he is employ'd, and if Favours are conferr'd upon him, and Obedience requir'd of him, gives Hopes of Impunity and Eſcape; and if the Perſons commit not new Offences,

without, at least, an Appearance of Insincerity, they are scarce wont to be condemn'd upon the first Sentence: But Sinners are spar'd by a *Forbearance*, or wise and just *Connivance*, if the Word would not offend. The *Governour* of the World knows and sees the Carriage of Sinners, is aware of their Sins, and keeps Silence for a Time; but yet keeps an Eye upon them, calls them not into Question, puts off the Trial, takes them not up, as it were, and winks at them. Now all this may be justly done for a Time; the Sinners may be employ'd, and Acts of Bounty, for holy and wise Ends, may be conferr'd on them, and exercis'd towards them, and that without the least Injustice, without any Design of *pardoning*; as the Sequel of this Discourse will more fully clear.

VI. This *Forbearance* of GOD is *Wise*, *Just* and *Holy*: For 1. He is the only competent Judge, as to the *Time* of punishing Offenders. It cannot be made appear, That he may not *thus delay*, even where he has no Thought of *pardoning*. 2. It implies *no Approbation* of the Faults formerly committed, or those they may commit, during this Interval of Time, since he has sufficiently testify'd against them, by the *Laws* he has made, which forbid them, by the *Penalty* he has annex'd to those Laws, and by *Examples* of his Severity upon others, which have not been wanting in any Generation. These may sufficiently acquit him; however, for a Time, he keep silent and conceal, as it were, his Knowledge of the Offences of some, or his Resentments against them, on Account of them. 3. He accomplishes Purposes worthy of him; which are sufficient to justify him in this Conduct, while he keeps Silence, and carries to them, as if there were no Offence, or he knew none, and they go on in their Rebellion or secret Practices against his *Law* and *Government*. Impudent Offenders have no Place left, either for Denial or Excuse of their Crimes, or Complaints against the Severity of his Resentments. Spectators are made to see, That it is not *Infirmity* or *Mistake*, but *fix'd Alienation* or *Enmity* that is so sharply punish'd. He serves himself of them, and makes them, tho' they *mean not so*, carry on the Designs of his Glory, either in helping or trying, or bringing into *Being* Persons, whom he has Design of Mercy upon. And sure he may justly do this, since not only he has the best Title to their Obedience; but he has all the Reason and Right in the World to use that *Life*, while he spares it, for what Purposes he pleases, which they have forfeited to *Justice*. Who can blame him, if sometimes he spares secret Plotters, and lets them

them go on till their Plots are ſufficiently rip'ned for their Conviction, and others Satisfaction. Nor is there any Ground to quarrel, if he deal even with the Worſt, as equal Judges do with the Mother guilty of ſome manifeſt Crime; they not only ſpare and delay the Execution, till the Child whom they deſign Mercy to, is brought forth; but do not take notice of her, or intimate even a Purpoſe of Puniſhment, till the Child is brought forth, leſt the Child ſhould ſuffer by the Mother's Deſpair and Grief. 4. This is yet more remarkably juſt in GOD, who can on the one Hand ſecure the *Criminal*, ſo that Juſtice ſhall not ſuffer by the Delay, and on the other, that the *Criminal* ſhall not run out into thoſe Impieties, that would croſs the *Ends*, endanger the *Safety*, or wrong the *Reputation* of his *Government*, with thoſe who are capable of making an equal Eſtimate of Things.

VII. It was every Way ſuitable and neceſſary that the Perſons thus ſpar'd, ſhould be continu'd under a *moral Government*. They were not to be rul'd by meer Force; 1. Becauſe they are, while under ſuch a *Forbearance*, capable of ſome Sort of a *moral Government*. When a Prince deals with Perſons, whom he knows to be on treaſonable Plots againſt his Government, and conceals his Reſentments, he ſtill manages them as Subjects, and continues them under a *Government*; nor is he faulty in doing ſo. 2. They are not, while under ſuch a *Forbearance*, capable of any other Government; for if once the *Ruler of the World* begin to deal in a Way of Force and Juſtice with them, then this *Forbearance* is at an End. 3. It were a manifeſt Reproach to the *Governour of the World*, if they were ſuppos'd under *no Government* at all. Beſides, on this Suppoſition, the *Ends* of his *Forbearance* could not be reach'd. And moreover, the *moral Dependance* of *Creatures* on their *Creator*, which can only be maintain'd either in this Way, or by putting them under the *penal Sanction* of the *Law*, would be diſſolv'd, which cannot be admitted.

VIII. Sinners under this Diſpenſation are ſtill under the *Law of Creation*: It's true *this Law* can no longer be the Means of conveying a Title to the *great* and *principal Reward*; but that is their own Fault, and not the *Governour's* nor the *Law's*. But notwithſtanding of this, they are ſtill under it, and it continues the *Inſtrument* of GOD's Government over them. For 1. The Ground of *Obedience* ſtill continues, albeit ſome of the *Motives*, yea, the *principal Incouragement*, I mean, *eternal Rewards*, are forfeited. The Obligation to *Obedience* can never otherwiſe be diſſolv'd, than by the inflicting of a *capital Puniſhment*, which

which puts out of all Possibility of yielding any *Obedience*. Some, I know, make the *Power* and *Right* of obliging, to consist *meerly* in a *Power* of *Rewarding* and *Punishing*: But this is easily evicted of Falshood: And albeit the learn'd Mr. *Gastrel* has advanc'd this, in his Sermons at *Boil's Lecture*, yet we have no Reason to receive it, as *Beconsal* in his Treatise of the *Law of Nature*, and others have sufficiently clear'd. 2. This *Law* is *sufficient* to answer the Designs of this *Forbearance*, and GOD's *Rule* over them, who live under it and by it. It has not lost its *directive Power*; but it is able sufficiently to instruct, at least, in these Duties, either as to GOD, our selves, or others, that are of absolute Necessity to keep up some Order and Decorum in the World, carry on regularly the Propagation of Mankind and the like. It is manifestly *sufficient* to be a *Test* to try Men's *Willingness* to obey, and convince Men of *Wilfulness* in their Rebellion; and to be a *standing Monument* of GOD's *Holiness*: Yea, it continues to have that Force upon the Consciences of the Generality, as to be a Check to keep them from running into Enormities subversive of all Order and Society, and destructive to the other Ends of GOD's *Patience*. 3. Experience fully clears, That Men still pay Regard to *this* Law, and this is the *only* Law that Men destitute of a *Revelation*, own.

IX. While GOD saw meet to continue this *Forbearance*, it was not necessary nor suitable, That he should *plainly*, *particularly* and *solemnly* intimate all the Length he design'd to carry his Resentments against Offenders. 1. There was no Necessity of this towards the clearing of GOD's *Holiness*; this being sufficiently done by the *Promulgation* of the Law, its *Penalty* and many particular *Examples*. 2. This would have undone the *Dispensation* whereof we have been speaking. 3. This is utterly inconsistent with all the Designs of it. Men had been driven into Despair, and so all *moral Government* had been dissolv'd.

X. Yea, it was consistent with his *Holiness*, and suitable to his *Wisdom*, to permit Men to *fall into Sin*, very great Sins, and for a Time to go on in them. GOD can neither do any Thing that is *unworthy*, nor omit any Thing that is *worthy* of him, of a *moral Kind*. And it is certain in Fact, That *such Sins* and *Enormities* he has permitted: And therefore, however strange it appears to us, that a holy GOD, who could have *restrain'd*, should *permit* those Things; yet since he, who can do no *Evil*, has done it, we must conclude this altogether consistent with his *Holiness*. And it is manifestly so with his *Wisdom*, since no Injury is done to his *Holiness*. For 1. By this Means Sinners give full

full Proof, what a Height their Enmity againſt GOD is come to. 2. They are the Meeter to exercise his own People. And 3. They are the riper for the Strokes he deſigns to inflict on them.

XI. Notwithſtanding of all this, it was *meet* and *neceſſary* that ſome *Offences* ſhould be *remarkably puniſh'd*, and ſome Bounds ſet to *Offences*; and more especially, thoſe *Offences* which croſs the Deſigns of GOD's *Forbearance*, and tend to diſſolve the *Government* and *Order*, which it was neceſſary GOD ſhould maintain in the World. And hence it has come to paſs, That not the greateſt Sins, ſuch as theſe certainly are, which immediately ſtrike againſt GOD; but theſe, which ſtrike againſt *Order* and *Government*, have been moſt remarkably puniſh'd in all Ages, as might be made appear by innumerable Inſtances of the remarkable Puniſhments of *Murders*, *Treaſons*, and *Undutifulneſs* to Parents. This is congruous to *Juſtice*, not only on the mentioned Account; but on this, That the *Notices* concerning theſe laſt Sort of *Evils*, are much more clear in moſt Inſtances, than thoſe which reſpect the Former.

XII. It is every Way ſuitable to the *Wiſdom*, *Sincerity* and *Holineſs* of GOD; yea, and of abſolute Neceſſity to the *Deſign* of this *Forbearance*, that he exerciſe *Bounty* in leſſer Things; ſuch as the good Things of this Life are: And that he vouchſafe thoſe mental Enduements to ſome of the *ſpar'd Sinners*, which are neceſſary toward the Maintenance of *that Government*, which GOD was to keep up among them; ſuch are *civil Wiſdom*, *Invention*, *Courage*, &c. Theſe he may give without the leaſt Intimation of any Deſign of *ſpecial Mercy*. For what Relation have theſe Things to *ſpecial Mercy*, which are heap'd in Abundance on the worſt of Men. However, that it was fit theſe Things ſhould be beſtow'd upon ſome in this Caſe, is evident, becauſe 1. *Eternal Rewards* are now forfeited, and there would have been Nothing to induce to *Obedience* if this had not been. 2. Hereby he gives a Witneſs to his own *Goodneſs*, which aggravates Offences committed againſt him. 3. Hereby he draws on Men to *Obedience*, or rather to do thoſe Pieces of Service, which are in their own Nature, ſuch as he allows and requires, albeit they deſign not his Service, but their own Pleaſure and Profit. 4. Hereby he quits Scores with Sinners, while he ſuffers not what is even but *pretended Service*, to paſs without a *Reward*, which is ſufficient to ſhew what a kind Rewarder he would have been, if they had indeed obey'd. 5. Hereby he cuts off all Excuſe for their Continuance in *Diſobedience*. 6. This Conduct gives them an innocent Occaſion of diſcovering *latent Wickedneſs*, which otherwiſe they would have

have had no Access to shew, and keeps from that utter Despair, which would have marr'd the Design of GOD's *Forbearance*.

XIII. These Vouchsafements of *divine Bounty* lead to a Sort of *Repentance*, not that to which the *Promise of Pardon* is join'd in the Gospel. For 1. They give eminent Discoveries of the *Goodness* of that GOD whom we have offended, and consequently of the *Folly* of offending him, which naturally leads to *Sorrow* or *Regret*. 2. They strengthen, as all Benefits do, the *original Obligation* to *Obedience*. 3. They let us see, That *Obedience* is not altogether fruitless, since they may expect less severe Resentments if they return; yea, may expect some Share in this *Bounty*, and are not under an *Impossibility of Mercy*, for any Thing they can know.

XIV. After all, I do yet see no Reason to think, That they, who are *meerly* under such a *Dispensation* as this, which I take to be the Case of the *Heathen World*, are under a *Law of Grace*; which assures, That upon a *Return* to *former Obedience*, Sins shall be entirely pardon'd, and they have Access to *eternal Rewards*. I grant it highly probable, That if GOD had not intended *Grace* to some, such a *Dispensation* had never been. I admit, That this *Dispensation* is subservient to a *Design of Grace* upon some. I further allow, That there is no *absolute Impossibility* of the Salvation of Persons, however deeply guilty, who are not yet under the *Penalty*: But if they are sav'd, it must be by some Means or Way reveal'd by GOD, and superadded to all the Former, which I can never see to amount to any *Law of Grace*, since it is manifest, 1. That all this may be exercis'd towards them whom GOD in End designs everlastingly to punish. He exercises *much Long-suffering to the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction*. 2. There is Nothing in this whole Dispensation, that in the least intimates any Purpose of GOD to pass by former Offences, either *absolutely* or upon *Condition*. 3. In Fact it has never been found, That ever this *Dispensation* has led any one to that *sincere Repentance*, which must be allow'd necessary, in Order to Pardon. And I dare not say, That GOD ever did appoint Means for such an End, which after so long Trial should never answer it. 4. All whom GOD has pardon'd, or of whom we may say, That he has brought them to *Repentance*, have been brought by other Means. So that upon the Whole, I see no Ground for asserting an *universal Law of Grace*.

As what has been above said, takes off the principal Pretence for such an *universal Law of Grace*, which some seem so fond of; so if any such is asserted, it must be own'd to be *a Law* of a very *universal Tenor*,

as

as being that wherein all Mankind are concern'd. It muſt be allow'd a *Law* deſign'd to take off the Force of the *original Law*, concreated with our Nature, that neceſſarily reſults from the *Nature* of GOD and Man, and their *natural Relation*, at leaſt, as to one Inſtance, I mean the *penal Sanction*, in Caſe of Sin. It muſt be allow'd a *Law* not *meerly directive* as to Duty, but deſign'd to tender *undeſerved Favours* to ſinful Man. Now he that can think a few, or call them many, dubious Actions, that is, Actions capable of another, yea, contrary Conſtruction, a *ſufficient Promulgation* of ſuch a *Law*, as is of ſo univerſal Extent, as derogates, at leaſt, in one Inſtance of ſo great Moment, from a *Law* ſo firmly and ſolemnly eſtabliſhed, without any known Proviſion for its Honour, injur'd by ſo many Sins; and finally, that tenders ſuch great Favours to the Tranſgreſſors of it, may believe what he pleaſes. I muſt own this one Conſideration is with me enough to ſink that Notion.

But now to conclude this whole Matter, upon which we have dwelt ſo long; upon the niceſt Survey of all Occurrences in the *Heathen World*, I can diſcern Nothing that ſavours of any Acquaintance with that *Forgiveneſs* that is with GOD; unleſs it is that generally intertain'd Notion of the *Placability* of their Deities. This Notion, I make no Doubt, had its *Riſe* from *Revelation*, and was continu'd by *Tradition*. And ſeveral Things did concur to the Preſervation of this, while other *Notices* that had the ſame *Riſe* were loſt; the *apparent Neceſſity* of it to Man in his preſent ſinful Condition; the *Suitableneſs* of it to lay a Foundation for that *Worſhip*, to which the remaining *natural Notices* of a Deity urg'd them, and which was of indiſpenſible Neceſſity toward the Support of humane Government; the *Darkneſs* and *Blindneſs* of Men, as to the exceeding Sinfulneſs of Sin; the *Holineſs* of GOD's Nature, and the ſtrong Inclination all Men have to be favourable, even to their own Faults, did contribute not a little toward its Support. Finally, this *Placability* did not ſo much reſpect the *one true GOD*, of whom they had very little Knowledge, as their own *fictitious Deities*, which they put in the Room of the true GOD. And it's obvious, That when Men took upon them to ſet up *Gods*, they would be ſure to frame ſuch as might agree with their own Apprehenſions, and paſs by their Faults with as little Difficulty as they committed them. Whatever there is as to this, we have no Reaſon to think that this is a *natural Notice*, it being neither *ſelf-evident*, nor *certainly deducible* from *Principles* that are ſuch.

CHAP. XI.

Proving the Insufficiency of natural Religion to eradicate our Inclinations to Sin, or subdue its Power.

I Think we have said enough to demonstrate the *Insufficiency of natural Religion*, to satisfy us as to the Way how we may obtain the *Removal of Guilt*, or the *Pardon of Sin*. Let us now see whether it is able to remove the *Corruption of Nature*, and subdue or eradicate our Inclinations to Sin.

Before we enter directly on this, it will not be impertinent, if it is not plainly necessary, that we say somewhat concerning the *Nature of this Corruption*. We shall therefore offer the few following Hints concerning it.

I. It is most certain, That Man has *corrupt Inclinations*. I think this will scarce be deny'd; since it's beyond Contradiction evident, That the Bulk of Mankind in all Ages, have run headlong into those Courses which *Reason* condemns as contrary to the *Law*, under which we are made. The *Law* condemns, *Reason* justifies the *Law*, and proclaims those Courses unworthy of us; *Conscience* checks and sometimes torments, and yet Sinners run on. Can all this be without *corrupt Inclinations* swaying, yea, as it were, forcibly driving that Way? No sure.

II. 'Tis certain, That not only there are *such Inclinations* in Man, but that they are hugely strong and forcible. Our own *Reason* condemns those Actions, and cry, *Shame* on the Sinner's Conscience presages the Resentments of the righteous GOD, the evil Effects of them are visible, and they are felt to be destructive to our Health, ruining to our Reputation and Estates, inconsistent with our inward Peace; yea, in not a few Instances, humane Law provides terrible Punishments: And yet, in spight of all those strong Mounds, we are carried down with the Stream: Nor can the most forcible rational Considerations, from *Interest*, *Honour* or *Prudence* stop our Carreer. Certainly the Force of Inclination, that carries over all those, must be great.

III. It

these corrupt inclinations

III. It seems plainly *natural* and *congenite* to us; I shall not nicely enquire in what Sense it is so. I am far from thinking, That our *Natures* as at first made, were created with it. I have said enough before to prove this impossible: But I mean, That as our Natures *now* are, however they came to be so, it is an inseparable Appendage of them, cleaves to them, and proceeds not meerly from *Custom*, and is not acquir'd, tho' it is oft improv'd by *Custom*. Now this seems evident from many Things, 1. The *Universality* of it. All Men, in all Ages, in all Places, and in all Circumstances, have such *vitious Inclinations*. I do not say that every Individual is *proud*, *ambitious*, *covetous*, *revengeful*, *passionate* and *lustful*. No, but every one has some one or other of these, or the like breaking out; which says, The *Spring* is within and is strong; tho' the Constitution of our Bodies, the Climates we live under, our Education and Way, Manner and Circumstances of Life, have dam'd in some of them, and cut out Channels for others of them. Now it's plainly unaccountable how all Men should be thus corrupt, if not naturally so. No parallel Instance, in any Sort, can be given, where any Thing not *natural* and *congenite*, at least as to its *Principle* and *Inclination*, has obtain'd such an *universal Sway*. 2. It waits not till we are grown and form'd by *Education*, *Custom*, *Engagement* and *Inventions*; but makes strong, discernible and sensible Eruptions in *Infancy* and *Child-hood*. Assoon as we are capable, and very oft, while one would think us scarce so, by Reason of Age, we are *proud*, *revengeful*, *covetous*, &c. which says, This is *congenite*. 3. 'Tis oft seen, That *those Corruptions* break out in our young Years, which neither Education, Example, Circumstances, nor any Thing else, save a *corrupted Nature* can give any Encouragement to. 4. Yea more, how strong are these Inclinations, and that very early, which are discourag'd, oppos'd, born down, and have all outward Occasions cut off from them. One is *passionate* amongst calm People, tho' he is punish'd for it and sees it not. Another is *ambitious* and *proud* amongst sober People, in mean Circumstances, where there is no Example to excite Ambition, no Theater to act it upon, and the Beginnings are curb'd by Precept, Instruction, Reproof, Chastisements and Example. 5. Those Things are evidently interwoven with, and strength'ned by the very *Constitutions* of our Body and *Climates*, under which we live. Hence there are *domestick* and *national Vices*, which cleave to some *Families* and *Nations*. 6. The best, the most sober, and freest from discernible Eruptions of *Corruption*, yet do own they find the Inclinations strong,

and driving them into indiscernible Acts correspondent to them. 7. They who deny the *Force* and *Being* of these Inclinations, and who pretend the *Will* of Man able to master all these, yet cannot but own, that there are *such Inclinations*; and as for the pretended *Ability* of the *Will* to conquer them, they give the least Proof of it, who pretend most to it: For if the *Will* is thus *able*, and if, as they pretend, they have sufficient moral Arguments which perswade to it, why is it not done? What stops it? 8. I shall only further offer the Testimonies of some few among the *Heathens*; *Timeus* the *Locrian*, who liv'd before *Plato*, tells us in his Discourses, "That "Vitiosity comes from our Parents and first "Principles, rather than from *Negligence* and "*Disorder of publick Manners*; because we never "depart from those Actions, which lead us to "imitate the primitive Sins of our Parents. *Plato* tells us, That, "*In* "*Times past, the divine Nature flourished in Men; but at length it mix'd* "*with Mortal, and* ἀνθρωπινου ἤθους, *humane Custom prevail'd to the Ruin* "*of Mankind: And from this Source, there follow'd and Inundation of* "*Evils on Men.* Hence he calls Corruption νοσον τῆ κατα φυσιν, *the natu-* "*ral Disease*, or *Disease of Nature, because the Nature of Mankind is* "*greatly degenerate and deprav'd, and all Manner of Disorders infest hu-* "*mane Nature: And Men being impotent, are torn in Pieces by their own* "*Lusts, as by so many wild Horses.* Hence *Democritus* is said to affirm, "*The Diseases of the Soul to be so great, that if it were opened, it would* "*appear to be a Sepulchre of all manner of Evils.*

Gales *Court of the Gentiles, Part* 4. *Lib.* 1. *Cap.* 4. *Par.* 2.

Arist. *Ethick, Lib.* 1. *Cap.* 13.

"*Aristotle* tells us, That there is in us some- "what *naturally repugnant to right Reason*, "παρυκο ἀνιβατιον τῶ λογω: *Seneca* Epist. 50. gives us a very remarkable Account of his Thoughts in this Matter. The whole were worthy to be transcrib'd, but it's too long. I shall translate a Part of it. "Why do we deceive our selves? Our Evil is "not from without; it is fix'd in our very Bowels. *Alibi*, All Sins "are in all Men, but all do not appear in each Man: He that hath "one Sin hath all. We say, That all Men are intemperate, avaricious, "luxurious, malignant; not that these Sins appear in all; but be- "cause they may be, yea, are in all, altho' latent. A Man may be "nocent, tho' he do no Hurt. Sins are perfect, before they break "forth into Effect. It is worthy of our Observation, what Mr. *Gale* tells us, after he has quoted these Words, That *Jansenius* breaks forth into

into a Rapture upon hearing theſe *Philoſophers* philoſophize more truly about the *Corruption of Man's Nature*, than *Pelagians* and others of late.

But the *Oracles of Reaſon* tell us, That it is deny'd, "*That the Lapſe* "*of Nature is univerſal, becauſe ſome, through the Courſe of their Lives,* "*have prov'd more inclinable or prone to Vertue than to Vice.*" I have ſpoke to this before, but I add, 1. This is not enough, they are more prone to *Vertue* than *Vice*: For the Queſtion is, Whether they have *Inclinations* to *Vice*, and not, Whether the *Contrary* are ſtronger? 2. This cannot be pretended to be the Caſe with many. Now, ſince the Queſtion is about *a Religion ſufficient* for all Mankind, if any of them have ſuch a Diſtemper, and *natural Religion* provide no Cure, it is *inſufficient*. 3. It is not, Whether there are Men that have been prone to *ſome Vertues*, and averſe from *ſome Vices*, poſſibly ſcandalous Sins? But whether there have been Men inclin'd to *no Sin*, prone to *all Vertue*? If they aſſert ſuch an one, ſhew us the Man. We cannot believe any ſuch, ſince all we know are otherwiſe, till we ſee a Condeſcenſion. 4. It's not the Buſineſs whether Men have done *vertuous Acts ordinarly*, that is, The *material Acts* of *Vertue*: For *Corruption* may run freely out in this hidden Channel. A Man may be ambitious, proud and live among Perſons, with whom *Vice* is decry'd, open Vice I mean, and therefore affects a great Exactneſs as to *Morality*. This is good: But this is all but a Sacrifice to *Ambition*. One *Luſt* is the *principal Idol*, all the reſt are ſacrific'd to it. *Corruption* turns not troubleſom, and is pleas'd, if it get Vent any Way. A ſtrong Spring, if it may get a Vent under Ground, may preſs a Vent above; yet it will eaſily be reſtrain'd there.

Now this being the Caſe plainly with Man, it is impoſſible for him to reach *Happineſs*, while *this Corruption* remains; nor can he be ſure of *Acceptance* with GOD. While Things are thus, *Nature* is imperfect, *Man* is out of Order, *Reaſon*, the nobler Part, is at under, and *Paſſions*, the brutal Part, bear the Sway. This is more unſeemly, than to ſee *Servants on Horſes, while Princes walk on Foot*. There is continual Occaſion for Remorſe, Checks, Challenges of Conſcience, and Fears of the Reſentment of a holy GOD. There can be no firm Confidence of Acceſs to GOD, or near Fellowſhip with him, while we entertain *his Enemies* in our Boſom; nay, have them interwoven, as it were, with *our Natures*.

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The *Deists*, I know, make a horrible Outcry against *Christians*, for asserting this *Corruption of Nature*. *Herbert*, in his Book *De Veritate*, has many bitter Invectives against the Asserters of it; and yet, overcome with Evidence of Truth, he is oblig'd frequently to acknowledge it plainly: Yea not only does he acknowledge it, but he pleads this directly, in Excuse of the most abominable Wickedness. After he has told us, That the Temperament or Constitution of our Bodies have a powerful Influence to sway us to some Sins, he subjoins, " *Quo* " *Pacto haud ita levi Negotio damnandas existimo, qui ex* Προσυγχεσια *aliqua* " *prævaricantur. Quemadmodum igitur* Flagitii *haud juste argueris* " *Lethargum Desidem, aut Hydropicum Bibacem; ita fortasse neque Veneris,* " *aut Martis Œstro percitum modo in peccantium Humorum Redundantiam,* " *potius quam pravum aliquem Habitum, Delictum commode rejici possit.* " *Neque tamen me hic* Conscelerati *cujusvis Patronum sisto; sed in id* " *solummodo contendo, ut mitiori Sententia de iis statuamus, qui* corporea, " brutali, *& tantum non* necessaria *Propensione in Peccata prolabuntur.* Well, here is a handsom Excuse for *Vice*. We must be as far from condemning him, who prompted by *Passion*, slays and murders, or hurried on by *Lust*, commits Rapes and Adulteries; as of censuring him, who is sick of a *Lethargy*, for his Lazines and Indisposition to act; or one that's *Hydropick*, for his immoderate Thirst. This Divinity will please profane Men to a Degree. The *Salvo* he subjoins is very frivolous, and deserves rather Contempt than an Answer. But to leave this, 'tis plain, That there are *such Inclinations*, and that if they are not rooted out, we are undone. What tho' Men might have *Hopes*, if they but err'd once, that they might easily obtain *Remission*; yet sure it must confound them, when they still sin on, and that out of Inclination. Unless therefore *natural Religion* is able to cure *this Disease*, and eradicate *those Inclinations*, it serves to no valuable Purpose, at least, it is *insufficient* as to the *great Ends* of *Religion*, *our own Happiness*, or *Acceptance* with GOD. And that really it cannot do so, will be clear by the following Considerations.

I. If this *Corruption* is *congenite* to our *Natures*, as the abovemention'd Arguments go near to demonstrate, and the *Christian Religion* fully proves, it is evident, That there must be some *Change* wrought upon *our Natures*. Now this is more than *natural Religion* can pretend to, which knows nothing of *Regeneration*, and the *sanctifying Work* of the Spirit of Grace. I know *Plato* and some others have talked of *Inspiration*, and some *Aids* of GOD: But this was all but Chat, Amuse-

ment

ment and a few tinkling Words, which might pleaſe the Ears; but what Evidence could they give, That any ſuch Thing was attain'd, or attainable!

II. Tho' this were given up; yet of whatever Nature this *Corruption* and *Impotency* is, call it *natural* or *moral*, 'tis certain, That it is ſtrong; *natural Religion* cannot give *ſufficient Security* that it is practicable to eradicate it. We know that ſome Streams of *this Corruption* may be dam'd in, ſome of the top Branches lopt off, and ſome of the Fruits of it may be pluck'd. This, in ſo far as it is done, is good for Mankind, and uſeful in Society. Some of the *Philoſophers* have gone a great Way in it, and thereby have ſham'd moſt who are call'd *Chriſtians*. But what is all this to the *eradicating of Corruption*, purifying the Minds of Men, and univerſal Conformity in Heart to *the Rule* of Duty? The Attainments of *Philoſophers* need not here be talked of: Their Vertues were but *Shews* and the *Shadows* of them. Search to the Bottom, and you will find, That what they call'd *Self-denial*, was only a Piece of delicate Intereſt in Order to reach *Self-ends*: It was but a parting with one Thing pleaſant to our ſelves, to gain a greater, which is Selfiſhneſs to the Height. As for that *Self-denial*, which *Chriſtianity* teaches, it was not heard of, or known in the leaſt. *Liberality* was but a meer Trade of *Pride*, which values no Gifts, provided it have the Glory of being liberal; *Modeſty* was the Art of concealing our *Vanity*; *Civility*, but an affected Preference of other Men before our ſelves, to conceal how much we value our ſelves above all the World; *Baſhfulneſs*, but an affected Silence in thoſe Things, which Luſts make Men think of with Pleaſure; *Benevolence* or the Deſire of obliging other Men, but a ſecret Deſire of obliging our ſelves, by getting them to befriend us at other Times; *Gratitude*, but an Impatience to acquit our ſelves of an Obligation with a Shamefacedneſs for having been too long beholding to others, for ſome Favour receiv'd. So that all theſe pretended Vertues, in general, have only been ſo many Guards made uſe of by *Self-love*, to prevent our Darling and ſecret Vices from appearing outwardly. All theſe are no Evidences, what may be done towards the Removal of *corrupt Inclinations*. Nor indeed can *Nature's Light* ſatisfy us that it is practicable. Can it ſhew us the Man that has done it? This were ſomewhat to the Purpoſe, could he be nam'd. But this cannot be. Will it tell us that we have a *Power* to do it? But this is ſomewhat that we ſee and find by *Experience*, the ſtrongeſt and moſt convincing of all Arguments, not to be true.

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We find we may restrain or forbear *some outward Actions*, but we have no Experience of a *Power* to lay aside or divest our selves of *Inclinations* so deeply rooted. Besides, they, who talk of *this Power*, whereof others have no Experience, are liable to be question'd upon several Things which they cannot fairly or satisfyingly answer. Why don't they more than others who find it not, but complain of the Want of this Power? Why do not they show, That *those Inclinations* are *eradicated* which they own should be laid aside, which they assert they have a Power to lay aside, and which they say they have been long trying to overcome? The World will be forward to judge, at least, the thinking Part of Mankind will be so, That they are rather misled by some fond Speculations to judge they have a *Power* they really want, than that this *practical Proof* should fail, which seems scarce capable of an Answer.

Now will Men be effectually ingag'd in a Work so difficult, which they are never like to bring to an Issue? Will they not rather choose to yield to the Conqueror than ingage in a War that must last while they last, and that without Prospect of Conquest and being Masters at last? Yea, have they not done so? Who will be induc'd to such an Undertaking without Incouragement?

III. If this is practicable, yet it must be own'd extreamly difficult, and what Men will not easily be engag'd in. Inclinations are deeply rooted, strength'ned by Custom, and in most advantaged by Temptations, whereof the World is full. Now if *natural Religion* is supposed able to perswade to such an Undertaking, it must be well furnished with strong Motives and Inducements. Whence shall those be fetch'd? From the *Rewards* of *Vertue*, and the *Punishments* of *Vice* on the other Side Time? We heard how short the Accounts of *Nature's Light* of these are. The Impressions of these were always more deeply rooted in the *Vulgar*, than the *Philosophers*; yet they had no such Effect. It's plain, outward Incouragements do not attend the Practice of *Vertue*. There remains only then the *Beauty* of *Vertue* it self. Of this the *Philosophers* have talk'd wonderful Things. But the Mischief on't is, it was but *Talk* when they miss'd other Things, they could, ev'n with their dying Breath, as *Brutus* one of the *Adepti* is said to have done, call *Vertue* but an *empty Name*. They liv'd otherwise than they talk'd, the best of them not excepted. 'Tis excellently said by ingenious *Claudian*,

Ipse

Ipſa quidem Virtus Pretium ſibi ſolaque late
Fortunæ ſecura nitet, nec Faſcibus ullis
Erigitur, Plauſuve petit clareſcere Vulgi.
Nil opis externæ cupiens, nil indigna Laudis,
Divitiis animoſa ſuis, immotaque cunctis
Caſibus; ex alta Mortalia deſpicet Arce.

De Conſulatu Mallii Theodori ab Initio.

This is indeed very prettily ſaid; but this is all. Men may pleaſe themſelves with refin'd Speculations of the Excellency of *Vertue*: But it's not this alone that can ſway corrupt Man. It is not the Queſtion, *What Vertue really is*; but what Men *think of it*, and can be made to ſee in it. And it is certain, all the *Philoſophers* could never perſwade the World of it; and no Wonder, for they cou'd not perſwade themſelves. Mankind have had other Thoughts, and it muſt be other Views than Nature can give, that will beat them out of this. Another Poet plainly opens the Caſe,

Turpe quidem dictu (ſed ſi modo Vera fatemur)
Vulgus Amicitias Utilitate probat:
Cura quid expediat prior eſt, quam quid ſit honeſtum,
Et cum Fortuna ſtatque caditque Fides.
Nec facile invenies multis in millibus unum,
Virtutem Pretium qui putat eſſe ſui.
Ipſe Decor Recti, Facti ſi Præmia deſint,
Non movet, & gratis pœnitet eſſe probum.

Ovid. de Ponto, Lib. 2. Eleg. 3.

Here is the true State of the Caſe. But come cloſly up the Point, this *Beauty* of *Vertue* is not diſcernible till we have made ſome Progreſs in it. While corrupt Inclinations are in their Vigor in the Heart, ſuch *a Beauty* is not eaſily ſeen. 2. It's a *Beauty* too fine to be perceiv'd by vulgar Eyes, or indeed by any, without deeper and nicer Conſideration, than moſt of Men can go to the Charge of. 3. *Alone* it's not *ſufficient* to ſupport and carry on in ſo hazardous an Undertaking. 4. This Advantage is not to be felt, till *the Vertue* be obtain'd. It's a Queſtion whether it will be attain'd. So that it's plain, *natural Religion* wants Motives to engage effectually to this.

IV. 'Tis ſtill further conſiderable to this Purpoſe, That theſe *vitious Inclinations* are ſtrong, if not ſtrongeſt in thoſe, who have neither

Capacity to dive into those few refin'd Considerations, which inforce the Practice of *Vertue*, and the subduing of *Corruption*, nor indeed to understand them, when propos'd, nor have they Time or Leasure to attend to the Discourses of the *Philosophers*, when they are taught, or Money to purchase them. And *natural Religion* provides no Teachers, at least, if we take it according to the Accounts, we get from the *Deists*, who bear such a terrible Grudge to *a standing Ministry*, and have so oft in their Mouths that Reflection of *Dryden*, *Priests of all Religions are the same.* Now what a sad Case are poor Men in, who are sollicited by outward Temptations and pushed on by strong Inclinations, and have so small Assistance given them by *natural Religion.*

V. As Motives are wanting, so the Work is not easily carry'd on, the Way of Management is difficult, and the Directions given us by the *Philosophers* or others, are exceedingly Unsatisfactory. Some of them are impossible, such as the entire laying aside our Affections; others of them ridiculous, such as that Direction above-mention'd out of *Plato*, for the Purification of our Souls by *Musick* and *Mathematicks*, &c. Others, and indeed most of them only tell us what we are to do, bid us do the Thing, but tell us not *how* to set about it; some of them only tell us how to conceal *inward Corruption*, or divert it. And, perhaps, I should not say amiss, if I should say, That what the best *moral Philosophers* either aim'd at or attain'd, was only to dam in *Corruption* on one Side, to let it run out at another; or to make that run in a secret Channel, which run open before. It were long to examine their several Directions. The learn'd *Herbert* gives us a Summary of them, which I shall here present the Reader with. 1. *We should suppress all our vitious Affections.* This is but to advise the Thing, without telling us *how* it is to be done. 2. *That we expiate our Sins by deep Repentance, and by the instituted Sacrifices or Rites.* This is only a Remedy for *Guilt*, and an ill one too, as has been clear'd above. 3. *That we avoid the Society of evil Men.* But then *we must go out of the World*, or at least, out of the *Heathen World.* 4. *That we use the Company of good Men.* But where shall we find them amongst those, who have no more but *natural Religion?* 5. *That we enquire carefully what is to be done, and what's not to be done:* But the Question is, when we know it, How shall we get the one avoided and the other followed, considering we have a strong Aversion to *Good*, and Inclination to *Evil?* 6. *That our Sins, which arise from humane Frailty, should*

be

be corrected or laid aſide. But ſtill the Queſtion occurs, *How is this to be done?* 7. *That we ſhould uſe Supplications and Prayers to the Gods, as the Prieſts preſcribe.* But for what, and upon what Ground? And what will this help the Matter?

VI. To conclude this Argument, the *univerſal Experience* of Mankind bears Teſtimony to the Weakneſs of *natural Religion.* Nothing in this Matter was ever done, or done to Purpoſe, ſave where *Revelation* obtain'd. Should we narrowly ſcan the *Lives*, not of the *Vulgar*, but of the *Heathen Philoſophers*, as *Plato*, *Ariſtotle*, *Seneca*, *Plutarch*, *Cato* and *Brutus*, we might eaſily pull off the Maſk, and diſcover how little it was that they attain'd in this Matter, or rather, nothing at all. Yea even a *Socrates* himſelf would not be able to ſtand before an impartial Enquirer. I believe he could not give a good Account of his *Amours*, and thoſe practical Inſtructions, which he is ſaid to have given his Scholar *Alcibiades*. He repreſs'd well the *Vanity* and *Pride* of other *Philoſophers*: But perhaps, nay I need not ſay *perhaps*, with *greater Pride*; yea even his *Death*, the moſt applauded Part of his whole Conduct, might be unmaſk'd, and depriv'd of the unjuſt Elogies, which ſome have made on it, who, it may be, never read the Accounts we have of it, or ſeriouſly conſidered his Carriage on that Occaſion. 'Tis true he was unjuſtly put to Death, and behav'd very reſolutely: But whether he fell not a Sacrifice to his *own Pride*, as much as to the *Malice* of his Enemies, may be queſtion'd. This I ſay not to detract from thoſe great Men, whom I admire, conſidering their State; but to let ſee, That they went not ſo high as ſome would have us believe.

In fine, Till *Reveal'd Religion* appear'd, nothing was ſeen in the World of *true Piety* or *Religion*, of *Mortification* of *Sin*, or *Holineſs of Life*. The *natural Notices* could never make one *pious*, or indeed *moral*. Whereas *Chriſtianity*, upon its firſt Appearance in a Moment, as it were, made Millions ſo. And they who have rejected it, and ſet up for *Heatheniſm* again, under the new, but injurious Name of *Deiſm*, are no Friends to *Holineſs* of Life, *Piety* towards GOD, *Sobriety* in their own Way, nor *Righteouſneſs* among Men. How mighty Saints do *Blount*, *Hobbs*, *Spinoſa*, *Uriel*, *Accoſta* and others make.

I deſign'd to have proceeded further, to demonſtrate the *Inſufficiency of natural Religion* to anſwer the *Ends* of *Religion*, by the Conſideration of its *Inſufficiency* to ſupport under the *Troubles of Life* or amongſt the *Terrors of Death*: But upon ſecond Thoughts I judg'd, after what has

been said, it was not needful. Besides, if any look but at it, they may easily see it utterly *insufficient* to this Purpose, as it is indeed to the other great ends of *Religion.*

If the well founded Prospect of *future Rewards,* and a clear Knowledge of the *Nature* and *Excellency* of *Things eternal* and *not seen,* the present Intimations of divine Love, in cross Dispensations, the Supports of divine powerful Grace under them, the Usefulness of those Calamities, by Virtue of the divine Ordination and concurrent Influence of the divine Spirit, verify'd in the Experience of the Sufferers, are laid aside, as *natural Religion* does, which knows nothing of these, all that Men can say to comfort under Affliction, or arm against the Horrours of Death, is but an unprofitable Amusement, or, at least, like Rattles and other Toys we give to Children, that do not, in the least, ease them of the Pains they are under; but do, for a little, divert the Mind, while they are look'd at: But assoon as the first Impression is over, which those new Toys make on the Mind, the Sense of Pain recurs again, with that redoubled Force, which it always has, when it immediately succeeds either Ease or Want of Sense. And if it is really violent, these Things will not avail, no not to divert Trouble for a little. It's but a sorry Comfort to tell me, That others are troubled as well as I, or worse; That *Death,* which I fear, will end it; That I must bear it; That I have other Enjoyments, which yet present Pain will not allow me to relish. Yet such are the best Consolations *natural Religion* affords.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Wherein the Proof of the Inſufficiency of natural Religion is concluded from a general View of the Experience of the World.

AS a Concluſion to, and Illuſtration of what has hitherto been diſcours'd, for demonſtrating the *Inſufficiency* of *natural Religion*, I ſhall here offer a *ſix-fold* View of the *Experience* of the World in general, without deſcending to particular Inſtances, which have in Part been touch'd at, and offer'd before, and are every where to be met with.

I. Let us view *Man* as a *Creature* made for *this End*, to *glorify GOD and enjoy him*, abſtracting from the Conſideration of his *Corruption*, which the *Deiſts* ſometimes deny, and ſometimes, with difficulty, do but in Part admit. And let us conſider him *as left* to purſue this *noble End*, in the Uſe of his rational Faculties, under the Conduct of the *meer Light of Nature*. If we conſider him thus, and enquire into the *Experience* of the World, how far he has reach'd *this End*, we ſhall find ſuch an Account, as will much confirm the Truth we have hitherto aſſerted, and weaken the Credit of the *Deiſts* their *imaginary Sufficiency* of *Nature's Light* to conduct Men to the *End* for which he was made.

If we look to the *Vulgar*, the Generality of Mankind, we ſhall find them in a Poſture much like that wherein the *Prophet* ſaw *the Princes* in the *Viſion*, with *their Backs* to the *chief End*, never once thinking for what they were made, purſuing other Things; every one, as Luſt led him, following his own Humor, walking in a direct and open Contradiction to *that Law*, which was originally deſign'd for the Guide of our Life, and the Directory to *Bliſs*, that Happineſs, which all would have, tho' they know not where to find it.

If we look at the *Philoſophers*, we may ſee them *ſitting up late, riſing early, eating the Bread of Carefulneſs*, wearying themſelves in the Search

Search of *Happiness*, running into some Hundereds of different Notions about it; and yet not one of them hitting, or at least understanding the *true one*. And as little agreed about the Way to it. We may hear them talk of *Vertue*, but never levelling it as its proper End, *the Glory of GOD*. We may hear them urging its Practice, but not upon the proper Grounds. Rarely any Regrad to the *Authority* of GOD, the only formal Ground of *Obedience*. Instead of plain Rules useful to Mankind, they obtrude cruptick and dark Sentences, rather design'd to make others admire them, than to be useful to any. They every where tack their own Fancies to the *divine Law*, a Weight sufficient to sink the other, as to its Truth, in the Apprehensions of Men, or at least, as to its Usefulness. They offer *a Rule* defective in most Things of Moment, corrupt in many, ruining in not a few Instances, destitute of any other Authority, than their own *Say*, or *ipse Dixit*, unintelligible to the Vulgar, and naked as to Inducements to obey it.

II. Let us consider *Man* as *made* for *this End*; but barr'd from its Attainment, by the Interposition of those great Hinderances and Rubs which now are certainly in its Way; I mean *Darkness*, *Guilt* and *Corruption*. There are *Stones* in the Way. How has *Nature's Light* acquit it self as to the *Rolling them away*? Truly they have been like *Sysiphus's Stone*, as fast as they have roll'd them up, as fast they have recoil'd and fallen back on them.

As to *that Darkness* that has overspread the Minds of Men; if we look at the *Vulgar*, we find them like Blind-men, content to jog on in the Dark, mir'd every where, stumbling frequently, and falling sometimes dangerously; yet satisfy'd with their Case, not looking after Light: Not so much because they want it not, as because they have no Notion of it, or its Usefulness; like Blind-Men that never saw the Sun, and therefore suffer the Loss of it with less Regret, than they who once saw, but now have lost their Eyes. They follow as they are led; are ready to take hold of any Hand, tho' of one as blind as themselves, and are never sensible of the Mistake, till sunk where they cannot get out again. The *Philosophers* indeed seem a little more sensible of their Case, and fancying Truth hid in *Democritus's* Well, dive for it, but lose their Breath before they come at it, and fall into dangerous Eddys or Whirlepools, where they *lose themselves* instead of *finding Truth*; or trying to fetch it up, but with a Line too short, they fetch up *some Weeds* that are nourished by their Nearness to the Waters, and please themselves with those. After all their painful Endeavours,

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we find them gropping in the Dark, as to all useful and necessary Knowledge of GOD, or the Way of Worshipping him; of ourselves, our Happiness, our Sins, the Way of obtaining Pardon, our Duty or our Corruption.

As to *Guilt*; if we look at the Case of Mankind, and his Endeavours for the Removal of it, we find the *Vulgar* drown'd in *endless Despair*, or *fatal Security*; like Men at their Wits End, trying all Ways that *Fear*, *Superstition*, or *rack'd Imagination* can supply, and still unsatisfy'd with their own Inventions, they are ready to try all Ways that self-designing Men, or even the Devil can suggest to them, sparing no Cost, no Travel, no Pain. They stand not to give *the Fruit of their Body for the Sin of their Soul*. The *Philosophers* either think through their Pride, they have *no Sin*, because they are not so bad, quite so bad as the *Vulgar*; or, if they still retain some Sense *of Sin*, they are driven into the utmost Perplexity, being convinc'd of the Wickedness of the Measures taken by the *Vulgar*, or at least, of their Uselessness and Impertinency, and yet unable to find out better; they try to divert their Thoughts from a Sore they know no Plaister for.

As to *Corruption*; we find all confessing it, crying out of the Disease; and indeed it's rather because it will not hide, the Sore runs, than because it's painful to many. The *Vulgar* despair of stemming the Tide, finding it easiest to swim with the Stream, are willingly carried headlong. The Body of *Philosophers* are indeed like weak Water-men on a strong Stream, they look one Way, but are carried another. Tho' they pretend they aim at ruining of *Vice*, yet really they do it no Hurt, save that they speak against it. A few of the best of them being ashamed to be found amongst the rest swimming, or rather carried down the Stream on the *Surface*, that is, in open Vice, have div'd to the Bottom; but really made as much Way under Water, as the other above.

III. Let us view Mankind under the *Goodness* and *Forbearance* of GOD, these Helps which some think *sufficient*: This Word is us'd, or rather abus'd as a *Blind* in a Matter of very great Importance; and Men who use it will scarce tell, if they can, ev'n in the Subject of the present Discourse, in what Sense they use it. But let it be as it will, some pretend the *Works of Providence*, particularly GOD's *Goodness* and *Forbearance sufficient*. Well, let us see the *Experience* of the World in this.

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If we view Mankind under this Consideration, we may see them so far from being led to *Repentance*, that most Part never once took Notice of this Conduct of GOD. Others, and they not a few, have abus'd it to the worst Purposes. *Because Judgment against an evil Work* has not been *speedily execute, therefore* their *Hearts* were *wholly set in them to do evil.* The more Inquisitive have rais'd a Charge against GOD as encouraging Wickedness. And as for the Favours they enjoy'd themselves, they look'd on them, not as *Calls* to *Repentance*, but as *Rewards* for their *pretended Vertues*, and scanty ones too, below the Worth of them. Not a few of them have gone near to arraign GOD of *Injustice* for lesser Afflictions they were trusted with; while others have been entangled and toss'd to and fro by cross Appearances. So that none have by this *Goodness of GOD* been led *to Repentance.*

IV. Let us view Men living in the Place where *Revelation* obtains, or where the *Christian Religion* is profess'd and taught, but renouncing and rejecting it, and in Profession owning only *natural Religion*: Such are the *Deists* among us. If we consider their Words, they talk indeed that *natural Religion* is *sufficient*; and to make it indeed appear so, some of them have adorn'd it with Jewels borrow'd from the Temple of GOD, ascribing to *Nature's Light* Discoveries in *Religion*, which originally were owing to *Revelation*, and were never dream'd of where it did not obtain; tho' being once discover'd, they have gain'd the Consent of *sober Reason*. But now we are not considering the *Speech*, but the *Power* of these Men; not what they *say* of the *Sufficiency* of *natural Religion*, but what *real Experience* they have of it, and what *Evidence* they give of this in their *Practice.*

If we thus consider them, we find, That albeit when they have a Mind to impose their Notion of the *Sufficiency* of *natural Religion* upon others, they pretend, That it is clear, as to a great many Points or Principles, that are confess'dly of the greatest Moment in *Religion*; yet while they begin to speak more plainly and freely their own inward Sentiments, they shew that they are not fix'd, no not about the very *Principles* themselves, even these of them which are of the greatest Consequence. Mr. *Gildon*, Publisher of *the Oracles of Reason*, is not far from asserting two *Anti-gods*, one *Good*, the other *Evil*; and so falls in with the *Persians*. *Blount* favours the Opinion of *Ocellus Lucanus*, about the *World's Eternity*, and consequently denies, or at least, hesitates about

Oracl. of Reason Page 194.

Oracl. of Reason, Pag. 212,— 228.

about *Creation*. The *Immateriality of the Soul* seems to be flatly rejected by them all. Nor do they seem very firm about its *Immortality*. In short, after they have been at so much Pains to trim up *natural Religion*, and make it look *sufficient like*, they yet express a Hesitancy about it's *Sufficiency* to *eternal Life*. We have heard *Herbert* to this Purpose already. *Blount* in a Letter to Dr. *Sydnham* prefix'd to the *Deists Reasons*, tells plainly, That 'tis not safe to trust *Deism* alone, without *Christianity* join'd to it. And the *Deists* Hope is summ'd up in *this*, in the 4th Chap. of the *Summary of the Deists Reasons*, That *there is more Probability of his Salvation, than of the credulous and ill-living Papist: and that is just none at all.*

Oracl. of Reason, Pag. 154, 187, *&c. Ibid. P.* 117, 127.

Oracl. of Reason, Pag. 87, 91.

Nor does their Practice give one Jot of a better Proof of the *Sufficiency* of *that Religion* they profess: Yea, it affords convincing Evidence of its *Weakness*, *Uselessness* and *utter Insufficiency*. Their *Lives* shew they are not in earnest about any Thing in *Religion*. They are *Latitudinarians* in *Practice*. Their Words, their Actions, have no Savour of a Regard to a *Deity*; but they go on in all Manner of Impieties in Practice, and perhaps in End, put a Period to a wretched Life by their own Hands, as *Blount*, *Uriel*, *Accosta* and others have done, and the Survivers justify the Deed, upon trifling and childish Reasonings; as not knowing but they may one Day be put to use the same Shift. I am not in the least deterr'd from asserting this, by the Commendations that the Publisher of the *Oracles of Reason* gives to Mr. *Blount*, as a Person remarkable for *Virtue*. If a profane, jocular, and unbecoming Treatment of the gravest and most important Truths, that belong, even by his own Acknowledgment, to *natural Religion*; yea and are the principal Propes of it; and if gross and palpable Disingenuity be Instances of that *Virtue* he ascribes to him, and Evidences of those *just and adequate Notions of the Deity*, in which, he says, Mr. *Blount* was *bred up*, I cou'd give Instances enough from the Book it self of such Vertues: But I love not *to rake in the Ashes of the Dead*. Again, others of the Deists, having wearied themselves in Chase of a Phantom to no Purpose, and having neither the Grace nor Ingenuity to return to the Religion they abandon'd, either land in downright

Oracl. of Reason, at the Beginning, Account of Blount's *Life.*

Atheism in Principle and Practice, or they throw themselves into the Arms of the pretended infallible Guide; and thereby give Evidence how well founded the Jesuitical Maxim is, *Make a Man once an Atheist, he will soon turn Papist.*

V. Let us view Men living under the *Gospel*, imbracing it in Profession, but unacquaint with that *Spirit* that gives *Life* and *Power* to its *Doctrines*, *Precepts*, *Promises*, *Threats* and *Ordinances*. They, besides that they are possess'd of all the Advantages of *Nature's Light*, have moreover the superadded Advantages of *Revelation*, and its *Institutions*. They have *Ministers* and *Parents* instructing them, and *Discipline* to restrain them, they are train'd up in the Faith of *future Rewards*, and instructed in the Nature and Excellency of them for their Encouragement, they have *Punishments* propos'd to them to deter them from *Sin*, which they profess to believe; yet if we consider the Practice of the Generality of such Persons, it gives a sufficient Evidence, that all this is not enough. Who but a Man blind or foolish can then dote so far, as to pretend *Nature's Light* alone *sufficient*, when it is not so, even when helped by so many accessory Improvements.

VI. If we consider the Experience of them, who have receiv'd the *Gospel* in *Truth*, and felt its *Power*, we find they have indeed reach'd the *Ends* of *Religion* in Part, and have a fair Prospect as to further Success. Well, what is their Sense of the *Sufficiency* of *Nature's Light?* Why, if you observe them in their publick Devotions, you shall hear heavy Out-crys of their own *Darkness*, *Weakness* and *Wickedness*; you may hear *serious Prayers* for *divine Light*, and Life to quicken them, strengthen and incline them to follow Duty, and support them in it, against the Power of Temptations, which they own themselves unable to master, without the powerful Aids of *divine Grace*. If you follow them into their Retirements, where the Matter is manag'd betwixt GOD and them alone, where they are under none of these Temptations, to maintain the Credit of any receiv'd Notions, and therefore must be presum'd to speak out the practical Sense of the State of their Case, without any Disguise; there you shall find Nothing but deep Confessions of Guilt, Darkness and Inability, with earnest Crys, Prayers and Tears, for Supplies of Grace: And what they attain in Matters of *Religion*, you shall find them freely owning, That it was not *they*, but the *Grace of GOD* in them that brought them to this. And the more any is concern'd about Religion, know and has attain'd in it, still you will find him the more sensible of this State of Things.

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This is but a Hint of what might have been said: But I have rather chosen to offer a general Scheme of the Argument from *Experience*, which every one, from his own private Reading and Observation, may illustrate with Observations and particular Instances, than to insist upon it at large, which would have requir'd a Volume.

CHAP. XIII.

Wherein we make a Transition to the Deists Pleas for their Opinion, and take particularly Notice of the Articles to which they reduce their catholick Religion, give some Account of Baron Herbert, *the first Inventer of this catholick Religion, his Books, and particularly of that which is inscrib'd,* De Religione Gentilium, *as to the Matter and Scope of it, and the Importance of what is therein attempted to the Deists Cause.*

WE have now propos'd and confirm'd our Opinion; our next Business is to enquire more particularly into that of the *Deists*, and consider what they offer for it.

The first Set of *Deists*, so far as I can learn, did satisfy themselves with the Rejection of all *supernatural Revelation*, and a general Pretence, That *natural Religion* was *sufficient*, without telling the World of what *Articles* it did consist, what belong'd thereto, or how far it went. The learn'd Lord *Herbert* was the First who did cultivate this Notion, and lick'd *Deism*, and brought it to something of a Form. This Honour he assumes to himself, glories in it, and we see no Ground to dispute this with him. I have met with Nothing in any of the *modern Deists* that makes toward this Subject, which is not ad-

vanc'd by him, and probably borrow'd from his Writings. It will not therefore be impertinent to give the Reader some Account of him.

This *Edward Herbert* was a Descendant from a younger Brother of the Family of *Pembroke*. He was Brother to the famous *George Herbert* the *divine Poet*. His Education was at *Oxford*, where he was for some Time a *fellow Commoner* in *University-college* there. After he left the University, he improv'd himself by Travels into forreign Nations, and obtain'd the Reputation of a *Scholar*, a *Statesman* and *Souldier*. He was made *Knight of the Bath* at the Coronation of King *James* the I. in *England*, who afterward sent him as Ambassador to *Lewis* the XIII, on Behalf of the *French Protestants*: And upon his Return he was created *Baron of Castle-Island* in *Ireland*, and by King *Charles* the I. *Anno* 1630, he was created a *Baron* of *England*, by the Title of *Lord Herbert of Cherburry*, and died in 48.

Monsieur Bayle's Geogra. Diction. See Herbert & Deism.

See also, Life of Mr. George Herbert.

This learn'd Person having once unhappily apostatiz'd from the *Religion* wherein he was bred, into *Deism* tho', as other *Deists* likewise do, he did still seem to own the *Church of England*; yet he set himself for the Maintenance of *Deism*, in his Writings. And to this Purpose he publish'd some Time after the 1640, (for I have not the first Edition of it) his Book *de Veritate*; and shortly after, another *de Causis Errorum*. These two Books are for most Part *philosophical*, and written with some Singularity of Notion. What is Truth in them is rather deliver'd in a *new Way*, than *New*; and by the Use of vulgar Words, in new and uncommon Acceptations, and his obscure Way of Management of his Notions, is scarce intelligible to any save metaphysical Readers, nor to such, without greater Application, than perhaps the Matter is worth. I should not think my self concern'd in either of these two Books, their Subject being *philosophical*, were it not that it is his avow'd Design in them, to lay a Foundation for his peculiar Notions in *Religion*.

There are two Things, at which *Herbert*, in these, and his other Writings, plainly drives; to overthrow *Revelation*, and to establish *natural Religion* in its Room. It is not my Design nor Province at present, to defend *Revelation* against the Efforts of this or any other Author, tho' I think it were a Business of no great Difficulty to remove what

what *Herbert* has said against it; yet since I have mention'd his Attempt upon it, I cannot pass it without some short, but just Remarks upon his unfair, if not disingenuous Way of treating *Revelation*.

1. On many Occasions, with what Candor and Ingenuity himself knew, he professeth a great Respect to *Revelation* and particularly to the *Scriptures*, and pretends he designs Nothing in Prejudice of the *establish'd Religion*: But any one that peruses the Books will soon see, That this is only like *Joab*'s *Kiss*, a *Blind* to make his Reader secure, and fear no Danger from the *Sword* he has under his Garment: For notwithstanding of this, he every where insinuates Prejudices against all *Revelation*, as *uncertain*, *unnecessary* and of *little* or *no Use* to any, save those to whom it was originally or rather immediately giv'n.

2. Upon all Occasions, and sometimes without any Occasion giv'n him from his Subject, he makes Sallies upon Truths of the greatest Importance in the *Christian Religion*; such as the Doctrines of the *Corruption of Nature*, *Satisfaction of Christ*, and the *Decrees of GOD*, &c. And having represented them disingenuously, or else ignorantly, which I less suspect in a Man of his Learning, not in that Way they are propos'd in Scripture, or taught by those who maintain them, but under the Disguise of gross Misrepresentations, mistaken Notions, and strain'd Consequences: And having thus put them in Beasts Skins, as the primitive Persecutors did the *Christians*, he sets his Dogs upon them to worry them; and this without any Regard had unto the Foundation they have in the Scriptures, or the Evidence of the Proofs that may be advanc'd for the Scriptures in general, or these Doctrines in particular, and without all Consideration of the Inconsistency of this Way of treating Truths plainly taught, and inculcate, as of the greatest Importance in the Scriptures, with that Respect, which upon other Occasions he pretends to that *divine Book*.

3. He states wrong Notions of the *Grounds* whereupon *Revelation* is receiv'd, and overthrows those imaginary Ones he has set up, as the Reasons of our Belief of the Scriptures, and then triumphs in his Success. How easy is it to set up a *Man of Straw* and beat him down with the Finger?

4. The *Deists* generally, and *Herbert* in particular, do grant, That the *Christian Revelation* has manifestly the Advantage of all other Pretenders to *Revelation*, as *Religio Laici*, P. 9, 10. in Respect of the *intrinsick Excellency* of the Matter,

Matter, so likewise in Respect of the *Reasons* that may be pleaded for its Truth. And so certain is this and evident, that one of their Number owns, That *Christianity* has *The fairest Pretensions of any Religion now in the World*, and exhorts to *make a diligent Enquiry into it*; arguing, *That if the Pretences of Christianity be well grounded, it cannot be a frivolous and indifferent Matter*; and he grants further, That *the Truth of the Matters of Fact which confirm it, is hardly possible to be deny'd.* Now notwithstanding of this manifest and acknowledg'd Difference betwixt the *Scriptures* and other Pretenders to *Revelation*, when *Herbert* speaks of *Revelation*, he jumbles all Pretenders together without Distinction, and urges the Faults of the most ridiculous and obviously spurious Pretenders against *Revelation* in the General, as if every particular One, and especially *Christianity*, were chargeable with these Faults: Is this candid and fair Dealing, to bear the unwarry Reader in Hand, that these palpable Evidences of Imposture are to be found in all Revelations alike, while, even, they themselves being Judges, the Scriptures are not concern'd in them? Yet this is the Way that *Christianity* is treated by this learn'd Author; and his Steps have been closly trac'd in this Piece of scandalous Disingenuity, for I can give it no milder Name, by *Blount* and the other Writers of the Party, as I could make appear by many Instances, if need requir'd.

Letter to the Deists, P. 139.

5. Our Author makes high Pretences to Accuracy in searching after Truth, and treats all other Authors with the greatest Scorn and Contempt imaginable, as short in that Point: Yet he seldom states a Question fairly, but huddles all up in the Dark, especially, when he speaks about *Revelation*, and heaps together Difficulties about all the Concernments of *Reveal'd Religion*, without any Regard to the distinct Heads to which they belong. This is a ready Way to shake his Reader about all Truths, but establish him in none.

Other Reflections I forbear, tho' he has given fair Occasion for many: But this is not my Subject. This Part of his Discourse has been animadverted on by a learn'd Author, tho' the Book is not come to my Hand.

Baxter, *More Reasons for the Christian Religion, and no Reason against it, in the Appendix.*

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The other Branch of our Author's Design, *viz.* His Attempt to establish the *Sufficiency of natural Religion*, is that wherein I am directly concern'd. This he only proposes in his Book *de Veritate* at the Close, with a short Explication of his fam'd *five Articles*, of which more anon: And in a small Treatise entitul'd *Religio Laici*, subjoin'd to his Book *de Causis Errorum*, he further explains them. The Design of this last-mention'd Treatise is to shew, That the *Vulgar* can never come to Certainty about the Truth of *any particular Revelation*, or the Preferableness of its Pretences unto others, and that therefore of Necessity they must sit down satisfy'd with *the Religion* he offers them, consisting of *five Articles*, agreed to, if we believe him, by *all Religions*.

This *Religion*, consisting of *five Articles*, which we shall exhibit immediately, he attempts to prove *sufficient* by some Arguments in that last-mention'd Treatise. But the principal Proof, on which our Author lays the whole Stress of his Cause, is at large exhibited in another Treatise of our Author *de Religione Gentilium*, publish'd at *Amsterdam*, *Anno* 1663. by *J. Vossius*, Son to the great *Ger. Joan. Vossius*. His Pleadings in these and his other Writings we shall call to an Account by and by.

Herbert, in his Treatise *de Religione Gentilium*, pretends, Whatever Mistakes the *Gentile World* was under in Matters of *Religion*; yet there was as much agreed to by *all Nations*, as was necessary to their *eternal Happiness*. Particularly he tells us, That they were agreed about *five Articles* of *natural Religion*, which he thinks are *sufficient*, viz. 1. *That there is one Supreme GOD.* 2. *That he is to be worshipped.* 3. *That Vertue is the principal Part of his Worship.* 4. *That we must repent of our Sins.* 5. *That there are Rewards and Punishments both in this Life and that which is to come.* *De Relig. Gentil.* P. 186, 210, *&c.*

Charles Blount, who set himself at the Head of the *Deists* some few Years ago, in a small Treatise entituled *Religio Laici*, printed 1683, which in Effect is only a Translation of *Herbert*'s Book of the same Name, inverting a little the Order, but without the Addition of any one Thought of Moment; in this Treatise, I say, he reckons up the *Articles* of *natural Religion* much after the same Manner. 1. *That there is one only Supreme GOD.* 2. *That he chiefly is to be worshipped.* 3. *That Vertue, Goodness and Piety, accompanied with Faith.* *Relig. Laici*, Pag. 49, 50.

Faith in, and Love to GOD, are the best Ways of worshipping him. 4. That we should repent of our Sins from the Bottom of our Hearts, and turn to the right Way. 5. That there is a Reward and Punishment after this Life.

Another in a Letter directed to Mr. *Blount*, subscribed *A. W.* has given us an Account of them somewhat different from both the former in *seven Articles*. 1. *That there is One Infinite, Eternal GOD, Creator of all Things.* 2. *That he governs the World by Providence.* 3. *That it's our Duty to worship and obey him as our Creator and Governour.* 4. *That our Worship consists in Prayer to him, and Praise of him.* 5. *That our Obedience consists in the Rules of right Reason, the Practice whereof is moral Vertue.* 6. *That we are to expect Rewards and Punishments hereafter according to our Actions in this Life*; which includes the Soul's *Immortality*, and is prov'd by our admitting *Providence.* 7. *That, when we err from the Rules of our Duty, we ought to repent and trust in GOD's Mercy for Pardon.* To the same Purpose without any Alteration of Moment from what we have above quoted, *Herbert* reckons up and repeats the same Articles in his other Treatises.

Orac. of Reason. Pag. 197.

These other Authors do but copy after *Herbert*. To him the Honour of this Invention belongs, and he values himself not a little upon it. Let us hear himself. " *Atque ita (sed non sine* " *multiplici accurataque Religionum tum Dis-* " *sectione, tum Inspectione) quinque illos Articulos* " *sapius jam adductos deprehendi. Quibus etiam* " *inventis me felicionem* [illegible] Archimede *quovis existimavi.* He acquaints us, That he consulted Divines and Writers of all Parties, but in vain, for to find the *universal Religion* he sought after: It is not therefore likely, if any had moulded this *universal Religion*, or put it into a Form meet for the *Deists* Purpose before him, that it could have escap'd his Observation and Diligence.

De Relig. Gent. P. 218.

Now we have had a sufficient View of the *Articles*, to which the *Deists* reduce their *Religion*. Let us next enquire after the Proof of *this Religion*; The Burden whereof must lean upon *Herbert*. The *Deists* since his Time have added nothing that has a Shew of Proof that I can yet see. Well, after he has in his other Treatises, as has been said, propos'd and explain'd his *Religion*, he at length comes to the Proof

Proof of it in his Treatiſe *de Religione Gentilium*. Here the main Strength of his Cauſe lies, and with this we ſhall mainly deal; yet ſo as not to overlook any Thing that has a *Shew* of Proof elſewhere in his Writings.

In this Treatiſe *de Religione Gentilium* he makes it his Work to illuſtrate and prove, *That the above-mention'd five Articles were univerſally believ'd by People of all Religions.* This is the Propoſition at which that whole Book aims. In the Management of this Subject our Author gives great Proof of Diligence, vaſt Reading, and much philological Learning. He gives large Accounts of the *Idolatry* of the *Heathens* and their *Pleas* for it, or rather of the *Pleas*, which our Author thought might be made for it; which has given Occaſion to ſeveral Conjectures, as to our Author's Deſign in that Book, and his other Writings.

I find a learn'd Author, who has beſtow'd a few ſhort Animadverſions on this Book, inclinable to think it not unlikely, That the Lord *Herbert*'s principal Deſign was, if not to juſtify, yet to excuſe the *Idolatry* of the *Church of Rome*. And if one conſiders how many Pleas *Herbert* makes for the *Gentiles Idolatry*, and that they are generally ſuch as may ſerve for the *Romaniſts* Purpoſe; and if it is further conſider'd, that *Herbert* elſewhere ſeems, upon many Occaſions, to found the whole *Certainty of Revelation* upon the *Authority* of the *Church*, and that alone, and the vaſt Power he gives to the *Church* as to the Appointment of *Rites*, yea and all the *Ordinances* of *Worſhip*; if it is further conſider'd how concern'd ſome Perſons were for an Accommodation with the *Church of Rome* at that Time, when our Author wrote, and how far *Herbert* was concern'd in that Party, who ſtickl'd for this Reconciliation; if, I ſay, all theſe Things are laid together, this Conjecture will not appear deſtitute of Probability. I might add to this, That *Herbert* makes uſe of Pleas not much unlike thoſe, which are us'd by the *Church of Rome* to ſhake *Proteſtants* out of their *Faith*, that they may at length fall in with the *infallible Guide*. In fine, I dare be bold to undertake the Maintenance of this, againſt any

Abrah. Heidanus de Origine Erroris, Lib. VI. Cap. XI. P. 370.

Opposer, That *Herbert*'s Method follow'd out, will inevitably make the *Vulgar*, *Atheists*; whether he design'd by this to make them *Papists*, I know not, nor shall I judge. How far this Conjecture will hold, I leave to others to judge. I shall only add this one Thing more, That the seeming Opposition of *Herbert*'s Design unto *Popish Principles*, and his Thrusts at the *Romish Clergy* will not be sufficient to clear him of all Suspicion, in this Matter, with those, who have seriously perus'd the Books written by *Papists* in Disguise, on Design to shake the *Faith* of the vulgar Sort of *Protestants*, in some of which, there is as great Appearance at first View of a design'd Overthrow of *Popery*, and as hard Things said against the *Romish Clergy*: Good Water-men can look one Way and row another. What there was of this, will one Day be manifest.

The *Deists* maintain, That *their Religion consisting of the above-nam'd five Articles is sufficient.* It is the avow'd Design of *Herbert* in this Book to assert this and prove it, and yet he spends it wholly in proving this Proposition, *That these five Articles did universally obtain.* Now it seems of Concernment to enquire, why *Herbert* should be at so much Pains to prove this. How does *universal Reception* of these *Articles* establish *his Religion*, and of what Consequence is it to the *Deists* Cause?

For clearing this, it must be observ'd, That it is a *common Religion* that *Herbert* is enquiring after, which may be equally useful to all Mankind; and nothing can agree to this, which is not *commonly* receiv'd. And *Herbert* has before laid down this for a *Principle*, That the only Way to distinguish *common Notices* from these which are not so, is *universal Reception.* This according to him is the only sure Criterion. " *Religio est Notitia communis* —— *De Veritate*, P. 55. " Videndum igitur est, quænam in Religione " ex Consensu universali sunt agnita: Universa " conferantur: Quæ autem ab omnibus tanquam vera in *Religione* " agnoscuntur, communes Notitiæ habendæ sunt. Sed dices esse " Laboris improbi: At alia ad Veritates *Notitiarum communium* non " supereſt Via; quas tamen ita magni facimus, ut in illis solis *Sapientiæ* " *divinæ universalis* Arcana deprehendi possint.

But

But to ſet this Matter in a full Light, I ſhall make appear, That a Failure in this Attempt, to prove that theſe were univerſally agreed to, is inevitably ruining to the *Deiſts* Cauſe and Plea for a *common Religion*; tho' the Proof of this Point will be very far from inferring That there is a *common Religion*, as ſhall be clear'd afterwards. And this will give further Light into the *Reaſons* of *Herbert*'s Undertaking.

To this Purpoſe then it's to be obſerv'd, That the *Deiſts* being agreed about the Rejection of the *Chriſtian Religion*, and that *Revelation*, whereon it's founded; they are for ever barr'd from the Acceptance of any other *Revelation* as the Meaſure of *Religion* that the World knows: For they own no *Revelation* ever had ſo fair a Plea, and ſuch probable Grounds to ſupport its Pretenſions, as the *Chriſtian* has. However therefore the Generality of the *Deiſts* were ſatisfy'd to lay aſide the *Chriſtian Religion*, which will not allow them that Liberty in following the Courſes they are reſolv'd upon, without putting any Thing into its Place; yet the more ſober Sort ſaw, That to reject *this Religion* and put none in its Place, would, by the World, be counted *plain Atheiſm*, which deſervedly is odious in the World. Therefore they ſaw there was a Neceſſity of ſubſtituting one in its Place.

Now ſince *Revelation* was rejected, nothing remain'd, but to pretend, That *Reaſon* was able to ſupply the Defect and afford a *ſufficient Religion*, a *Religion* that is able to anſwer all the Purpoſes for which others pretend *Reveal'd Religion neceſſary*.

When once they were come this Length, it was eaſy to ſee that it might be enquir'd, Whether this *rational Religion* lay within the Reach of every Man's *Reaſon*, or was only to be found out by *Perſons of Learning*.

If it is pretended, That only *Perſons of Learning*, *Application* and *uncommon Abilities* could attain the Diſcovery of *this Religion*, the Difficulties whereon the Pretenders are caſt, are obvious.

What shall then become of their Argument against *Reveal'd Religion*, That it is not *universal*, *That it is not received by all Mankind*, *That therefore it is not attended with sufficient Evidence.* Upon this Supposition there is a fair Ground for retorting the Argument, with no less, if not more Force, against *natural Religion.*

Again, What shall become of that Plea, which they make for *natural Religion*, That *GOD must provide all his Creatures in the Means necessary for attaining that Happiness they are capable of?* May they not, on this Supposition, be urg'd, That, according to it, the *Vulgar* are not provided with *such Means?*

Nor will it avail to pretend, That those who are capable of *this Discovery*, are oblig'd to teach others the *Laws of Nature.* For, it may be enquir'd, Must the People take all on Trust from them, or see with their own Eyes? If they must take all on Trust, then is there not here a fair Occasion for charging *Priest-craft* upon them, who blame it so much in others? Will not this oblige our *Wits*, Men of *Reason* and *Learning* to turn *Creed and Systeme-makers?* Further, What will they say of their own Neglect, and the Neglect of the learn'd World in this Matter? How will they reconcile this to the Notion of GOD's *Goodness*, of which they talk so much, to suspend the *Happiness* of the greater Part of Mankind on their Care and Diligence, who quite neglect them, but keep up their Knowledge, and thereby expose the poor Vulgar to inevitable Ruin? Moreover, if they set up for *Teachers*, they must shew their *Credentials.* Finally, There is no Place, upon this Supposition, left for the strongest Pleas for a *sufficient Religion*, that's common to Mankind, which are taken from the *Nature* of GOD and Man, and their *mutual Relation*; because all these Arguments conclude equally for all Mankind, and so are not adapted to assert some peculiar Prerogative in one above another. Nor are any able to justify a Claim to any further *Ability* this Way, than he can satisfy the World of, by the Effects of it. When a Man pretends to no other Abilities, than such as are due to humane Nature, that *he is a Man* is sufficient to justify his Claim; but if he pretend to some Eminency in natural or acquir'd Enduements above others, he must give such

Proofs

Proofs of it, as the Nature of the Thing requires; that is, he muſt make appear, That he has that *Ability* by Actings proportionable to the Nature and Degree of the Power he claims; and further than this is done, no wiſe Man will believe him. It will not help them out here, to ſay, That they only of *better Capacities*, and who have *more Leaſure*, are able to diſcover this *natural Religion*; but the *Vulgar* are capable of judging and ſeeing with their own Eyes when it's propos'd: For, beſides that all the former Difficulties, or moſt of them recur here, ſtill it may be enquir'd, Is this made appear? The Difficulties on this Side are unſurmountable.

Wherefore, of Neceſſity, they are caſt on this, to maintain, *That every Man is able to find out and diſcover what is ſufficient for himſelf in Matters of Religion.* But now when this is aſſerted, if the *Experience* of the World lie againſt them, and it be found, as is commonly ſuppos'd, that many Nations, nay, the far greater Part of Mankind had no *ſuch Religion*, this will much prejudge their Opinion, about every Man's having this Ability of finding out *a Religion*, or as much in *Religion* as was neceſſary to his own *Happineſs*.

How will they perſwade the World of ſuch an *Ability*, if *Experience* croſs; yea if it be not made appear to favour them? It is commonly thought, and we have made it appear, That the wiſeſt Men, when they eſſay'd what Power they had of this Sort, foully blundered, and fell ſhort of ſatisfying either themſelves or others; and that the World generally acknowledg'd the Want of any Experience of this *Ability*, and therefore look'd after *Revelations* with that Greedineſs, that laid them open to be impos'd on, by every vain Pretender to *ſupernatural Revelation*.

Now if Things are allow'd to be thus; how ſhall they prove Man poſſeſs'd of this *Power*, if they are cut off from the Advantage of the uſual Fountain of Conviction, in Matters of this Nature? What is the Way we come to know, That all Men have a *Power* of Underſtanding, or that ſuch a *Power is* due to his Nature? Is it not hence, That wherever we meet with Men, we find them exerting the Acts of *Underſtanding*? And the like may be ſaid of his other *Powers*.

Now

Now if it is once admitted, That there are single Persons, nay, whole Nations, yea more, many Nations that have no Experience of this *pretended Ability*, in Reference to Matters of Religion, how will they ever be able to perswade the World that all Men have it? More especially, if it be admitted, That the Learn'd themselves were here defective, as to that which Persons of the meanest Abilities and least Leasure are suppos'd able for: This will look very ill, if a Man who toils all his Days at the Plough and Harrow, could make this Discovery, how could a Man of Learning and Application find it hard!

In a Word, if Things are thus stated, as is generally suppos'd, has been already proven, and shall be further clear'd anon, then there is little left them to pretend for this *natural* and *universal Ability* of Mankind in Matters of *Religion*, if not, perhaps, to tell us a Story of GOD's being oblig'd, in Point of *Goodness*, to endue all Mankind with a Capacity, whereof there is no Evidence in *Experience*; yea, which the *Experience* of the World plainly declares them to want. But this will not easily take with Men of Sobriety and Sense: For it is not more evident, That *there is a GOD*, than, That *this GOD must do whatever is proper and suitable for him to do*: And on the contrary, That *it was not necessary or proper for him to do any Thing that really he has not done*. If then, any shall pretend it becoming or necessary for GOD to do any Thing, which Experience shews he has not done, he will be so far from obtaining Credit with the World, that on the contrary, he will justly fall under the Suspicion of *Atheism*, and an *evil Design* against GOD. For to say, That GOD, in Point of *Goodness*, was oblig'd to do this, which Experience shews he has not done, is plainly to say, GOD acted not as became him. There was therefore a plain Necessity of undertaking to prove *Experience* on their Side, if *Deism* was to be supported.

If the common Apprehensions of Men, who enjoy the *Light of Christianity*, with Respect to the State of the *Heathen World*, are well grounded, all the Pretences of *Deists* as to the *Sufficiency* of *natural Religion* are for ever ruin'd, and quite subverted.

It

It was but neceſſary therefore, That the learn'd *Herbert*, who undertook to maintain the Cauſe, ſhould attempt to ſhew, That *Experience* was on their Side, and that in Fact a *Religion* in it ſelf *ſufficient* did univerſally obtain. And he had the more Reaſon to be concern'd in this Matter, becauſe he avows it as his Opinion, That without a Suppoſition of ſuch an *univerſal Religion* as the *Deiſts* do plead for, *Providence* cannot be maintain'd. " *Et quidem*, ſays he, *quum Media ad* " *Victum Veſtitumque hæc accommodata ſuppedita-*
" *rit cunctis* Natura *ſive* Providentia *Rerum com-* De Relig. Gentil.
" *munis, ſuſpicari non potui, eundem Deum, ſive* Cap. 1. Pag. 4.
" *ex* Natura, *ſive ex* Gratia *in ſuppeditandis ad*
" *beatiorem hoc noſtro Statum Mediis*, ulli *Hominum deeſſe poſſe, vel velle,*
" *adeo ut licet Mediis illis parum recte vel feliciter uſi ſint Gentiles, haud*
" *ita tamen per Deum Optimum Maximum ſteterit, quo minus ſalvi fierent.*
And as it is clear that this Author thinks, That *Providence* is not to be maintain'd without an *univerſal Religion*; ſo it is ſufficiently evident, That this *univerſal Religion* is not to be maintain'd, if *Experience* lies againſt it.

Here then was a plain Neceſſity for undertaking this Argument, and proving, or at leaſt, pretending to prove, That *all Mankind had a ſufficient Religion*, or were able to know all that was neceſſary. For we ſee the whole Frame of *Deiſm* falls to the Ground, if this is overthrown. This therefore was an Undertaking worthy of our noble Author's great Parts, long Experience, great Charity to Mankind, and the great Concern he profeſſes to find in himſelf for the Vindication of *Providence*.

And ſure if ſuch a Man, after ſo much Pains, has fail'd in the Proof of this Point, any that may ſucceed him, may juſtly deſpair of Succeſs. He read all the *Heathen* Authors to find *this univerſal Religion*, and he was as willing and deſirous to find it as any Man. And he has given in this learn'd Book Evidence enough of his Reading.

But ſince *no Religion* was to be admitted, ſave that whereon all Men were agreed, it was wiſely done by our Author, that he reduc'd *this univerſal Creed* to a *few Articles*. For one who knew ſo much of

the

the State of the World, could not but see, That they were not very many wherein they were agreed.

Well, he undertakes and goes through with the Work, and concludes with that memorable Triumph above-mention'd; "*Atque ita (sed* "*non sine multiplici, accurataque Religionum tum Dissectione, tum In-* "*spectione) quinque illos Articulos, sapius jam adductos deprehendi. Qui-* "*bus etiam inventis me feliciorem quovis* Archimede *existimavi.*

But one might possibly ask, How it could cost our Author so much Labour and Pains to find out *this Religion*, and severe the *Articles* belonging to it from others, with which they were immix'd, when every illiterate Man must be suppos'd able to do this?

However, if our Author is not bely'd by common Fame, he repented, That he had spent his Time so ill in contributing so far to the Advancement of Irreligion, tho' others contradict this, and tell us, That dying he left this Advice to his Children; "They talk of *trusting* in "Christ for *Salvation*; but I would have you to be vertuous, and "*trust* to your *Vertue*, to make you *happy*.

Whatever there is as to this, I shall now proceed to examine our Author's Arguments.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Wherein it's enquir'd, whether Herbert *has prov'd that his five Articles did universally obtain.*

WE have heard our Author's *five Articles* above; he pretends to make it appear, That they were every where received: We shall now enquire, whether the Arguments adduced by him do evict this; and then in the next place, we shall see whether it is indeed true. And for Method's Sake, we shall speak of every *Article* apart, and dissect and inspect his Book, to find all that he offers, which has the least Appearance of Proof.

ARTICLE I.

There is One Supreme GOD.

THat which our Author pretends to prove as to this *Article* is, That it was generally own'd by all Nations, That there is *One Supreme Being*, and that this *Supreme Being*, whom they own'd, was the very same whom we adore. We are not now to dispute, whether this *Article* may be known by the *Light of Nature*; nor whether some particular Persons went not a great Way in the Acknowledgment of it. This we have before granted: But the Question is, Whether all Nations agreed in this, *That there is one supreme GOD*, and he the *very Same* whom we adore? Let us hear our Author "Quamvis enim de aliquibus alijs Dei, sive "Attributis, sive Muneribus Disceptatio inter Veteres "esset, uti suo Loco monstrabimus; summum tamen aliquem extare, "& semper extitisse Deum, neque apud Sapientes, neque apud Insipientes Dubium (puto) fuit. And afterwards when he thinks the first Part of his Article sufficiently clear'd, he proceeds to the second part of it, *Reliquum est, ut Deum summum Gentilium, eundum ac nostrum esse probemus.* Thus we see what our *de Relig. Gent.* P. 158. P. 166.

Author pretends. Whether he has prov'd this, we are now to enquire. He has not digested his Arguments, nor cast them into any such Mould, as might make it obvious, wherein the Force of them lies, and therefore we must be at pains to scrape them together, whatever is any where, through his Book dropp'd that may contribute in the least toward the Strengthening of his Cause; and we shall not omit any Thing willingly, that has the least Appearance of Force.

The first Observation our Author insists on to this Purpose is, *That the Gentiles did not intend the same by the Name* GOD, *that we now do.* We by that Name design the *Supreme, Eternal, Independent Being*; whereas they intend no more than any *Vertue* or *Power* superiour to Man, on which Man did any Way depend. *Id omne Deum vocitarunt quod Vim aliquam eximeam in Inferiora, sed in Homines præcipue ederet.* This he frequently inculcates, and tells us in the first Page of his Book, That the Observation of this, was that which inclin'd him to think, or presume the Gentiles not chargeable with that Grass *Poly-theism*, with which most do, and he himself had, upon an overly View of their *Religion*, well nigh once concluded them chargeable.

De Rel. Gent. P. 13.

If the *Gentiles* meant the same by the Word *GOD*, which we do, no Doubt they stand chargeable with the most gross, unaccountable, absurd and ridiculous *Poly-theism* imaginable: For scarce is there any Thing *animate* or *inanimate*, but by some or other became *Deify'd*.

Aurel. contr. Sym. Lib. I. *Quicquid Humus, Pelagus, Cælum mirabile gignunt,*
Id dixêre Deos, Colles, Freta, Flumina, Flammas.

But our Author is not willing to admit that they were so absurd, and to induce us to favourable Sentiments, he has bless'd us with this Observation, That when they called those Creatures *Animate* and *Inanimate Gods*, they meant no such Thing as we do by that Name. Well, if we should grant that the wiser Sort, at least, or perhaps even the Vulgar too, did *sometimes* so understand the Word, as he alledges; will that serve his Purpose, and satisfie him? Nay, by no Means, unless we grant him, That always they so understood the Word, save when they spoke of the *One true GOD*. But this is too much to be granted, unless he prove it, especially if we are able to evince, That not a few, both *Wise* and *Unwise*, believed that there were *no* than *One Eternal, Independent Being*: And possibly this may be made appear afterward. A learned Author in Reproach of the *Grecian* and *Roman Learning*, says, *That setting*

ting aſide what they learn'd out of Egypt, *they could never by themſelves determine whether there were* many Gods *or but* One. *Wolſeley's Scripture Belief P.* 110.

The next Thing our Author inſiſts on to this Purpoſe, is, *That different Names do not always point out different Gods, but different Vertues of the ſame God* "Tot Dei Appellationes, quot Munera, adeoq; ſi triginta Millia Deûm Nomina (quod ab OEnomao & Heſiodo in Θεογονια perhibetur, ſupponat quiſpiam, & tot ejus Munera dari, fatendum eſt, *ſays* Seneca, *quoted by our Author. And conſequentially to this, the ſame* Seneca *tells us*, "Sapientes nequaquam Jovem eum intelleXiſſe, qui in Capitolio aut alijs Templis Fulmine armatus cerneretur, ſed potius Mentem Animumque exiſtimaſſe omnium Cuſtodem, Univerſiq; Adminiſtratorem, qui hanc Rerum Univerſalitatem condiderit, ac eandem Nutu ſuo gubernet, ac propteria divina quæq; Nomina ei convenire. Itaq; optimo Jure Fatum appellari poſſe, ut a quo Ordo, Serieſve Cauſarum inter ſe aptarum dependeat. Ita is Providentiam dicit, quum ipſe provideat ut omnia perpetuo ac perenni quodam Curſu, ad Finem ad quem deſtinata ſunt, currunt: Naturam quoque nuncupari, ex eo enim cuncta naſcuntur, per eum quicquid vitæ eſt particeps, vivet: Mundi quin etiam Nomen illi congruere. Quicquod ſub Aſpectum cadit, ipſe eſt, qui ſeipſo nititur, & omnia Ambitu ſuo complectitur, univerſaque Numine ſuo complet. To the ſame Purpoſe ſpeaks *Servius* of all the *Stoicks*, quoted likewiſe by our Author. The plain *Engliſh* of all is, he would bear us in Hand, that by thoſe Teſtimonies he has prov'd, That the *Gentiles*, when they attributed the Name *GOD* to ſo many Things, intended no more, but to ſet out ſo many *different Vertues*, which all reſided in the *ſame GOD*.

Seneca Lib. 5. *Cap.* 17. *Herb. de Rel. Gent. P.* 13. *P.* 47. *De Rel. Gent. P.* 37.

As to this, we may grant, That our Author has indeed prov'd, That *different Names* do not *always* point out *different Gods*; for he has told us that each of their Gods had many different Names. But this will do him no Service, if we grant not, That *different Names never* point out *different Gods*. But how ſhall we do this, when our Author has ſhewed us, that many Nations Worſhipped the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*; and thought 'em Gods, yea, diſtinct ones too, different in their *Natures* as well as *Names*. Each of them indeed had *different Names*, nay each of them had *many Names*, *Titles* or *Elogies* heap'd on them by their fond Worſhippers, who, belike, fancied, that their Gods were ſmitten with that ſame Vani-

ty, wherewith they themselves were tainted, which yet as learn'd *Rivet* observes, had a dangerous Effect upon the Vulgar in Process of Time: For they were not so quick in their Observations as our Author. *Coacervatis enim Elogiis, Titulisque congestis, capi Numen putabant, maximoque inde affici Honore; ita ut tandem quæ diversa tantum Nomina Superstitionis fuerant, grassante Errore, diversa Numina haberentur.*

Ad Hos. 2. 8. *Referente* Owen. *Theolog. P.* 189.

Further, we know full well that some of the more wise and learn'd Men, especially after the *Light* of the *Gospel* began to shine through the World, began to be asham'd of *their Religion*, and especially the Number of their *Gods*, and to use the same Shifts, to palliate the foolish and wild *Poly-theism*, which the Gospel so fully expos'd: and particularly *Seneca*, who was contemporary with *Paul*, and by some, upon what Ground I now enquire not, is said to have convers'd with him; and others of the *Stoicks* steer'd this Course to vindicate their *Religion* against the Assaults of the *Christians*. But it is as true, this was a foolish Attempt, and its Success I cannot better express, than in the Words of the learn'd and excellent Dr. *Owen*

Ubi supra P. 196. " Postquum autem severius paulo inter nonnullos " Philosophari cœptum est, atque limatiores de " Naturâ divinâ Opiniones inter plurimos obtinuerant, Sapientes pudere " cœpit eorum Deorum, quos protulerant ferrea Secula, Ignorantiâ & " Tenebris tota devoluta. Omnia ideo, quæ de Dijs fictitijs, Jove scil: " totoque sacro Helenismi Choragio, vulgo celebrata erant, Res natu- " rales adumbrasse apud antiquos Μυθολογας contenderunt. Thelogiam " hanc Μυθικην vocant, quam nihil aliud fuisse aiunt, quam Naturæ " Doctrinam allegoricam: *And some Passages after, he shews the Vanity of this attempt* " Postquam *Ibid P.* 198. " enim Evangelii Lumen usque adeo Radiis suis " Terrarum Orbem perculisset, ut erubescenda veteris Superstitionis " Insania apud ipsum Vulgus in Contemptum venerit, acutiores So- " phistæ, quod dixi, quo Stultitiam istam Colore novo fucatam, ama- " bilem redderent, Figmento *huic* (N. B.) cui adversatur omnis " Historiæ Fides, pertinaciissimé adhæserunt. *Imo*, ut obiter dicam, " innovata est primis Ecclesiæ Temporibus apud ipsos Gentiles, tota Philosophandi Ratio. *Any one that would desire to see the Folly of this Observation expos'd, on which our Author lays so much Stress, may peruse that Chapter whence these Words are quoted. Nor is this more*

Owen ubi supra Lib. 3. Cap. 6.

more than what Velleius *ſpeaks of* Zeno *a* Stoick *and others*, " Cum Heſiodi Θεογονιαν interpretatur, " tollit omnino *N. B.* uſitatas perceptaſque " Cognitiones Deorum, &c. Cicero *de Nat. Deor. Lib.* 1.

But were this true, which thoſe Quotations pretend, it will not yet come up to our Author's Purpoſe, for theſe Quotations tell us not that all the World were of this Mind, but only the wiſe Men; and I fear that this too needs a Reſtriction. Now this comes not near to the Point. When our Author has Occaſion to notice ſome abſurd Practices or Opinions that croſs him, he rejects them with this, " Quod a paucis " ſolummodo ſuperſtitioſè factum, non ſatis in " Religionem aſſeritur. Nos autem haud alia " quam quæ omnes, vel plerique ſaltem coluêre, " ſub Religionis Titulo ponimus. Now let this be, as it is, the State of the Queſtion, and what ſome of the wiſer did, is nothing at all to the Purpoſe; and this indeed is the Point. In fine, we doubt not before we have done, from our Author's own Book, to demonſtrate that what he aims at in this Obſervation, and conſequently all the Story of the *Myſtick Theology* of the *Heathens*, is utterly inconſiſtent with all *Faith of Hiſtory*, which makes us as ſure of this, as they can of any Thing, that many Nations, nay moſt Nations, nay moſt wiſe Men held a *Plurality of Gods*, even in the Senſe our Author would deny. *De Rel. Gent. P.* 12.

The next Obſervation he makes, is of Kin to the former. He following *Voſſius*, as he tells us, divides all the *Gentiles Worſhip* into *Proper*, *Symbolical* and *Mixt*. *Proper* is, when the *true God*, or the *Sun*, or the *Moon* is worſhiped *as* the *true God*, & the *Worſhip* is deſign'd *ultimately* to *terminate* in their *Honour*: *Symbolick* is, when the *true God* is worſhipped in the *Sun*, as an *Image*, *Repreſentation* or *Symbol* of him; then the Worſhip is not deſign'd only, nor mainly to terminate on the *Sun*, but on the *true God*. As for the *Mixt*, we are not concern'd to ſpeak of it. He would every where bear us in Hand, That all *their Worſhip* was *Symbolical*, and as ſuch he frequently ſeems to juſtifie, and avouch it as reaſonable, which the *Papiſts* will readily thank him for; and he expreſly aſſerts this, That all *their Worſhip*, *ſave what was directly addreſs'd to the true God*, which I believe was very little, *was Symbolick*. *Atque Cultum proprium nullum fuiſſe olim preterquam Jummi Dei, videtur.* It is well that he expreſſes this Poſition modeſtly, as being conſcious how great Ground others will ſee to judge otherwiſe. And the *De Rel. Gent. P.* 183. *Ibid.*

Reaſon

Reason that follows, drawn from the alledg'd Evidence of the Thing, we shall have under Consideration anon. But toward the
P. 226. Close of his Book, he calls them *Ignorants*, or *Scioli*, that believes not as he believes in this Matter.

But it would be expected, that when he advances such a bold Position, and is so hard on them that dissent from him, he would give good Proof of it; but if any expect that, he will find himself deceiv'd. I find indeed a Passage quoted with an high Commendation to this
P. 70. Purpose. " Atque hic de Cultu dei Symbolico preclarum " Locum ex *Maximo Tyrio* Dissert. 38. quem adducit *Vossius*, " supprimere non possum. Barbari omnes pariter Deum esse intelli- " gunt; constituere interim sibi alia atque alia Signa: Ignem *Persæ* Ima- " ginem quæ unum duret Diem, verax quid & insatiabile, sic *Maximi* " Verba vertit *Vossius*. But what is all this to the Purpose? Doth this Quotation from a *Platonick Philosopher*, who liv'd an Hundred and fifty Years after Christ, when the Gospel had overspread the whole World, and chas'd the *Pagan* Darkness away, and made 'em asham'd of their old Opinions, and improven *Reason*, prove any Thing? To spend Time on this, after what has been said above, were to trifle with a Witness. The *Deists* have not, nor can they ever prove the Truth of this bold Assertion; the Falshood of which we may detect before we have done. But hitherto our Author has only us'd his *Shield*; we must next see whether his *Sword* be not of better Metal. All that has been hitherto said, is only a *defensative* for the *Heathens Opinions* and *Practice*: We must now see by what Arguments he proves that this *first Article* did universally obtain.

His *first* Argument leans upon a few Quotations from some *Heathens*, who assert, That there is *one Supreme Being*, such as *Hierocles*, *Zoroaster*, and others, some of old and some of late.

But all this is nothing to the Purpose: For were there twenty times mo, who said so, this will not prove the Point he is oblidged to make good. He has undertaken to shew that it was not doubted among Wise or Unwise, *That there was one Supreme God, and he the same whom we adore.* Now what is this to the Purpose, to bring a few learn'd Men, telling not what were the Opinions of the *Nations* or *Times* where they liv'd, or of the *World*, but what their own private Opinions were? 'Tis not the Question what *Seneca*, *Zoroaster*, *Plato* and twenty mo thought, nay what *whole Nations* besides thought, but what the *whole World* thought in this Matter? This the Argument touches not.

His

His next Argument is drawn from the *Confeſſion of ſeveral Divines*. With this he begins his *Fifteenth Chapter*, and frequently ſpeaks of it. But this ſays no more for him, than mo, and perhaps more conſiderable Teſtimonies, do againſt him. Beſides, Since he has not condeſcended on the Perſons who fall in with him here, nor their Words, we muſt leave 'em, and tell we are not concern'd in them, nor oblig'd to follow them further, than they do the Truth.

But that which he lays the moſt Streſs on, is *the ſuppos'd Evidence of the Thing*. This he frequently inſiſts on, as to all his Articles, and its Force amounts to this. *It is ſo clear that there is* one only Supreme Being, *and that the Sun nor no other is* he, *that it could not eſcape the moſt dull and unthinking.* *See P.* 182, 166.

But here our Author puts me in Mind of the Companions of *Chriſtopher Columbus*, who firſt diſcovered *America*, about the Year 1592, They were one Day at Table with him, and began to depreciate and undervalue the Diſcovery he had made, telling him how eaſily others might have done it. Well, ſays he, I hold you a Wager, I do what none of you ſhall do, and preſently calling for an Egg, ſays he, None of you can make that Egg ſtand ſtraight on the Table; which when they had eſſay'd to no Purpoſe, he takes it, and cruſhes the End of it a little, and then it ſtood eaſily: which when they all ſaid, It was eaſie to do: Well, ſays he, it is very true, ye can do it after I have done it. It is eaſie to ſee Things after they are diſcover'd to our Hand, which we would otherwiſe never have thought of. All the World was not ſo diſcerning as our Author was, and his Followers pretended to be, and he has given us ſufficient Proof of that in his Book, and I truly wonder with what Face any Man could make uſe of this Argument after he had read, much more after he had write ſuch a Book, wherein it is made clear as the Sun, that many Nations believed no other God but the *Sun*, *Moon* and *Stars*, as we ſhall ſhew afterwards. And I muſt take Freedom to ſay, That our noble and learn'd Author, with the reſt of the *Deiſts*, and all the *Philoſophers*, who liv'd ſince the Goſpel obtain'd in the World, owe more to the *Chriſtian Religion*, than they have the Ingenuity to own. What they think ſo clear, when *Revelation* has not only taught them the Truths, but the Grounds of them, was dark not only to the *Vulgar*, but the wiſeſt of old. I cannot better conclude this, than by tranſcribing a Paſſage of the ingenious Mr. *Lock* his *Eſſay of humane Underſtanding*, "Had you or I, ſays he, ſpeaking about *innate Ideas*, been

1492. *Hornbeck de Converſione* Indorum *P.* 7.

"born

" born at the Bay of *Seldania*, possibly our Thoughts and Notions had " not exceeded these brutish ones of the *Hoteutots* that inhabit there; " and had the *Virginian King Apochancana* been educated in *England*, " he had, perhaps, been as *knowing a Divine*, and as good a *Mathema-* " *tician* as any in it. The Difference between him and a more improv'd " *Englishman*, lying barely in this, that the Exercise of his Faculties was " bounded within the Ways and Modes and Notions of his own Country, " and was never directed to any other or farther Enquiries: And if he " had not any Idea of *a God* as we have, it was only because he pursued " not those Thoughts, that would certainly have led him to it. Thus far he. If some Men had been born where the *Gospel Light* has not come, they would have learn'd to talk more soberly of the *Sufficiency* of the *Light of Nature*.

The only Thing that remains as to this *first Article* is, to prove, That this *One Supreme GOD*, whom he thinks he has prov'd, That the *Gentiles* all center'd in *was the* same GOD *with him, whom we Worship*; for this he refers us to three Scriptures. *Rom.* 1. 19. *Act.* 10 throughout. And *Act.* 17. 28, *&c.*

Our Author has not drawn any Argument from those Passages, but barely refers to them. He was particularly unlucky in quoting the last of them: For it oblidg'd him to take Notice of an Argument arising obviously from the Passage against the Purpose, he adduc'd it for the Proof of; and indeed that Passage affords several Arguments against our Author's Opinion in this Matter, which are not easy to be solv'd, if they who follow him, were to be determin'd by Scripture Arguments. But our noble Author has scarce fairly laid the *Objection*, which he started to himself from the *Altar to the Unknown God*. But to speak Home to the Purpose, there are only two Things that can be drawn from these Passages, or the like, (1) That some of the *Gentiles* knew the *True GOD*. (2) That all of them had some Notions of Truth concerning GOD, or which were only rightly applicable to the *True GOD*. The Actings of Conscience within, and the Works of GOD without them, enforced on them the Impression of some *Power*, superiour to 'emselves, on which they depended; and this was indeed a Notion of Truth concerning GOD; for this was only justly applicable to the *True GOD*: But yet they, thro' their Darkness and Wickedness, when they came to enquire more particularly after the True GOD, applyed these Notions to *Creatures*, and took them for this *True GOD*.

Now this is indeed all, besides bare and repeated Assertions, that I can

can find in our Author, to prove that his *firſt Article* obtain'd *univerſally*: And how far it is from Proving this, is evident from what has been ſaid.

ARTICLE II.

This One Supreme GOD is to be Worſhipped.

THE ſecond Article our Author has not attempted a ſufficient, nay nor any ſeparate Proof of: Wherefore we go on to the next

ARTICLE III.

That Vertue and Piety are the principal Parts of the Worſhip of this One True GOD.

THis he alſo pretends to have univerſally obtain'd, and that the *Gentiles* expected not *Heaven* for their *Worſhip*, or their *ſacred Performances*, but for their *moral Worſhip*, that is their Vertues. To prove this, is the Deſign of our Author's 15*th* Chapter, at leaſt till P. 195.

The firſt Thing he inſiſts on to this Purpoſe is, The high Reſpect which the *Heathens* put on thoſe Things, while they liſted, *Mens*, *Ratio*, *Pietas*, *Fides*, *Pudicitia*, *Spes*, and *Felicitas*, amongſt the Number of their *Gods*, and erected *Temples* to them. This he proves at large. But what all this makes to his Purpoſe, I am not yet ſatisfi'd.

This indeed proves that they had a Reſpect to all thoſe Things. Very true, ſo they had, and that becauſe of their Uſefulneſs in humane Society. Yea this proves that they had an undue Reſpect to them, ſo as to perform Acts of Worſhip to them. But that they deſign'd to worſhip God by thoſe *Vertues*, which they would not allow they had from him, as we ſhall hear afterward, is not ſo eaſily proven. Beſides, this was only at *Rome* that theſe Altars were erected, and ſo is far from concluding as to the reſt of the World, where *Vertue*, *Hope*, &c. had no ſuch *Temples*.

The next Thing our Author mentions for Proof of the *univerſal Reception* of this *Article*, is the *Cuſtom of the Heathens in Deifying their Heroes on Account of their Vertues* and *Piety*. But our Author knew too

much of the *Gentiles Religion* to believe that this proves any more, than the fulsom Flattery of the blinded World that deify'd even *Devils*, and, as our Author elsewhere well observes, *Men* that were no better than *Devils*; or if there was any more in this Custom, when at first invented, it was only some ill apply'd Piece of Gratitude to Persons, who had been their Benefactors, or the Benefactors of Mankind. And all this Respect, that was put on 'em, was not because their *Vertues* reflected any Glory on God, but because they had been useful to Men. Besides, *Religion* was old in the World before this novel *Grecian* Invention took Place. As the *Roman* Poet and Satyrist observ'd,

---------- *nec Turba Deorum*
Talis, ut est Hodie, contentaque Sydera paucis
Numinibus, miserum urgebant Atlanta minore
Pondere.

Nor did this universally obtain. So that the Argument concludes just nothing. It neither proves that all the World were agreed that *Vertue* and *Piety* are the principal Parts of the *Worship* of God, nor that on Account of these, Men get *eternal Happiness*. What their *Immortality* was, of which they talked, we may see under the *fifth Article*.

Some few Quotations from *Cicero*, *Seneca*, *Plato* and one or two mo compose our Author's last Argument. *Seneca* speaking somewhere of *Scipio Affricanus* says, " Animam quidem ejus in Cœlum, ex quo erat, " rediisse persuadeo, non quod magnos Exercitus duxit (hos enim *Cam-* " *byses* furiosus, & Furore feliciter usus habuit) sed ob egregiam Mode- " rationem, Pietatemque. *Cicero Lib. de Offic.* Deos Placatos facit Pi- " tas & Sanctitas. *And elsewhere he says*, Nec est ulla erga Deos Pi- " etas, nisi honesta de Numine eorum ac Mente Opinio: Quum ex- " peti nihil ab iis quod sit injustum, ac inhonestum *De Rel. Gent. P.* 187. " arbitrere. Some others he adduces from *Pla-* *to* and others, wherein they say, That *Happiness* and *Likeness* to God are obtained by *Vertue*.

But to what Purpose are all these brought? (1) There is Word here of *Gods* and *their Worship* and *Piety* as respecting them; but not one Word of the *One true God*, of whom alone we speak. (2) It is certain that this *Piety* and *Sanctity* according to those Authors, comprehended the *Worship* of their *Gods*, as our Author expressly confesses,

Atque

" Atque ad Pietatem conſummatam plurima inſuper (*that is beſides* Ver-
" tue *of which he ſpeaks before*) poſtulari ajebant, ſed ea preſertim quæ
" grati in Superos Animi Indicia eſſent, putà Sacri-
" ficia, Ritus & Ceremonias & hujuſmodi alia; *De Rel. Gent. P.* 185.
" quorum Farrago ingens fuit: Cæterum ſine præ- *additum*
" dictis Divis ſive Deabus, Animam Regentibus, Additum in Cœlum
" non dari. This laſt Part is only our Author's *Say*, and is not reconcile-
able with what he tells us of their Deifying ſome,
who were ſo far from being *Gods*, that they were, *P.* 195.
ſays he, *Ne Viri quidem probi*. (3) As for what
Cicero ſays, *That for Vertue and Piety we are advanc'd to Heaven*;
I do not know well how to reconcile it with what he ſays elſewhere in
his Book *de Amicitia*, *Vult plane Virtus Honorem*; *nec Virtutis eſt ulla alia*
Merces, otherwiſe than by thinking that by *Heaven*, his *Cœlum*, he meant
that which many of them meant by their *Immortality*, that is an *immor-*
tal Fame, a *good Reputation*, after they are gone amongſt the Survivers.
As for *Seneca*, *Chriſtianity* had taught him a little more, and his Teſti-
mony is not much to be regarded. (4) Were there Twenty mo of
them, they never come near to a Proof of the Point: It is the Sentiments
of the World that we are enquiring after, and not what were the
Thoughts of ſome of the more improv'd Philoſophers. The Queſtion
is not whether Men by the *Light of Nature* ſaw an *Excellency* in *Vertue*,
and that it was to be follow'd; but whether they look'd on it as a
Part, a *principal Part* of the *Worſhip*, not of *their Deities*, but of the *One true*
God; and that for which *Heaven*, not that *imaginary Heaven*, which
Men had at their Diſpoſal; but an *Eternity of Happineſs in Communion with*
God is to be obtain'd? Now our Author advances nothing to prove this
Point.

ARTICLE IV.

We muſt repent when we do Amiſs.

AS to this Article our Author Confeſſes ſeveral Things, which it
will be meet to notice in the Entry. (1) He
owns that the Ancients, the wiſer Sort of them, *P.* 197.
thought not *Repentance* a *ſufficient Attonement* for the
groſſer Sort of Sins; and quotes *Cicero*, ſaying, *Expia-* Cicero *de Leg. Lib.*
tio Scelerum in Homines nulla eſt. Where God was of- 1.

fended they sought Sanctuary in *Repentance*, and thought it *Sufficient*, but not where Men were wrong'd. " Cæterum licet in Remedium Peccati, " ubi Dei summi Majestas læderetur, Pœnitenti- " am sive Dolorem efficacem esse crederent: Non ita tamen ubi Ho- " mines Injuriâ vel Contumeliâ afficerentur, de Pœnitentia illa statuebant " *Gentiles.* (2) He confesses that they thought not *Repentance alone a sufficient Attonement.* He tells us that they had *Expiationes, Lustrationesque, sine quibus neque Crimine neque Pœnâ solutos semetipsos arbitrabantur.* Again, (3) He confesses that the Word *Repentance*, or *Penitence* was rarely us'd among the Ancients, in that Sense we use it. " Neque mihi Dubium quin eorum (scil. Peccato- " rum) pœnituerit *Gentiles*, quæ tot Mala accerce- " runt; licet rariùs quidem *Pœnitentiæ* Verbum inter Autores, eo quo jam " usurpatur Sensu reperiatur. Since then he makes all these Conces- sions, there remains no more save this, That he pretends all the " World " were agreed upon Repentance, as that which was of Use to expiate, at " least, some lesser Faults committed against God, and that we should, " when we Sin, be grieved for it.

De Rel. Gent. P. 198. *P.* 195. *P.* 198.

To prove this he quotes some Passages from *Ovid*, *Seneca* and some others. The only considerable Testimony is from *Periander*, who was one of the seven wise Men of *Greece*: One of whose Sentences, he says it was Ἁμαρτων Μεταβολευε, *Te mali pœniteat, ubi peccaveris.* *Seneca* says, *Quem pœnitet peccasse pene est innocens.* & Ovid.

Sæpe levant Pœnas, ereptaque Lumina reddunt
Quem bené Peccati Pœnituisse vides.

But all these are alledg'd to no Purpose. They do not prove that *Repentance* was look'd on as an *Expiation* by the *Gentiles*. *Ovid* and *Seneca* liv'd too late in the World, and had too great Access to learn from others, to be much regarded in this Matter; but they only speak their own Mind, and we have here no Argument of the Agreement of the World as to any Thing about *Repetnance*. The Opinions of the *Wise* are no just Measure of the Knowledge or Apprehensions of the *Vulgar*.

But that whereon our Author seems to lay more Stress, is their *Sacrifices*, which he pretends are an Evidence of their *Grief for Sin* or *Repentance*.

pentance. Quorsum enim nisi interno Dolore perciti, tot Ritus Sacraque ad Deos placandos excogitassent ?

But 1. If the *Gentiles* had been as much agreed about *Repentance*, as our Author pretends, they would indeed have spar'd all this Pains and Cost. (2) They were indeed *griev'd*, but this *Grief* they did not willingly Entertain, nor allow themselves in as their *Duty*; but look'd on it as their *Torment*, and sought Sanctuary in Means proper for appeasing their Gods, as they thought. (3) This *Grief*, which Sacrifices prove them to have had, is no more, but that uneasy Sense of *Sin* in the Conscience, which is a Part of its Punishment, and no Duty performed for their Deliverance; and this forc'd them upon all Ways that they could imagine to get rid of it, so that *Sacrifices* were what they betook themselves to, to save themselves or procure a Deliverance from our Authors *Penitence*. (4) Further, our Author, when it is for his Purpose, can put another Construction on their *Sacrifices*; while as we have heard above, he makes 'em only absurd enough Testimonies of *Gratitude* to the Gods, and to have no Respect to *Sin* at all. It is indeed true, That sometimes they were in this Way us'd; so *Pythagoras* is said to have us'd them when he offered *Hecatombe* to the Gods, for a Proposition which he found out; but for ordinary they were design'd as Expiatory. (5) Do their *Sacrifices*, which they offer'd to so many Gods, prove that they were troubled for offending the *One true GOD?* I believe not. Ay, but this was what our Author should have prov'd. (6) Does our Author tell us that they were so little agreed about this *Purgative*, That no less a Person than *Plato* discarded *Repentance*, and put *Philosophy* in its Room, as that whereby only we could be purg'd. And this leads me to a (7) Thing that shews of how little Signification this pretended Proof is, That it is known that the more decerning *Philosophers* made most light of those *Sacrifices*, yea of *Sin*, and consequently of our Authors Catholick Remedy, *Repentance*. As to the *Sufficiency of Repentance*, for the Place he assigns it, we have spoken to it above. Our Author, I think, has badly proven that it *universally* obtained. And indeed had there been as much Weight laid on it, as is pretended, we could not have miss'd a more large Account of it in the *Writings* of the *Gentiles*. Further (8) Our Author pretends, that *Repentance* is of no Avail, as to the *grosser Evils*, but only washes away *lesser Sins*, & we fear our Author would find some Difficulty to prove that generally the *Gentiles* were so concern'd for lesser Sins, as he pretends. (9) Had this been so well agreed, as he pretends, about *Repentance*, & had this been the Design of their *Sacrifices*, I do not well understand whey our Author should make such Op-

P. 196.

position

position betwixt *Sacrifices* and *Repentance*, as elsewhere he does; when he is speaking of several Faults of the *Heathen Priests*, he subjoins

P. 10. " Sed & hoc Pejus, quod quum ex vera Virtute, vel hinc ubi " exciderint ex Pœnitentia verâ, Pacem internam comparare " debuissent, ad Ritus & Sacra, quæ ipsi (Scil. Sacerdotes) Per- " agerent Res perducta est, *&c.* Here it would seem plain, That the People came at length, if not of their own Accord, yet by the Perswasion of *Priests* to overlook *Repentance*, and reject it, substituting other Things in its Room; and when once this obtain'd in one Generation, it's like it might spread and obtain in after Ages, being transmitted from Father to Son, and the Priests carrying on the Cheat; and so, at least, the World in all Ages, hath not made any Account of *Repentance*, as the only Expiation. Again, it would seem from our Author, That *Sacrifices* did not import, and were not Evidences of *Repentance*; but on the Contrary, Means invented to make People neglect it.

P. 197. I do not well understand how they, who if we may believe our Author, were all so fully agreed about *Repentance*, and were so prone and inclin'd to it, That their Minds run into it without any Perswasion, should need so much the Priest's Perswasion and be easily drawn off from that which they accounted so available. Let us hear our Author, speaking of Man's Recovery from " Sin, says he, Atque Instaurationem hanc fieri debere ex pœnitentia, " docuêre tum Philosophi, tum Sacerdotes, ita ut hanc agendam Animam- " que purificandam, sed non sine eorum Ministerio, sæpius inculcarent. " Bene quidem si Pœnetentiam satis Populo persuasissent, quod neutiquam " tamen ab illis factum fuit; licet adeo pronâ in eum sit Anima Humana, " ut etiam nullo Suadente, in Foro Interno ex Gratia Divina, Conscien- " tiæque Dictamine decernatur. Our Author tells us, That the Peoples *Sacrifices* were an Argument of their *Repentance*, as we heard above, and that the Priests perswaded 'em to it, and that they were all agreed, That *Repentance* was the only *Attonement*, & that the Mind of Man needs no Admoniser to perswade it to *Repentance*; and yet he tells us likewise in the Passages adduced, That *Repentance* was quite laid by, *Sacrifices* and *Rites* put in its Place, the People so ignorant of the Worth of it, as to let it go, and so backward as not to look after it, unless the *Priests* had press'd it more (and yet we are told they inculcate it oft) and in fine, the Priests so negligent, that they quite neglected their Duty. How to knit all this together I know not. I do think it were easier to make these Words overthrow our Author's Argument, than to reconcile 'em with them-

themſelves, with Truth, Reaſon or Experience; but I ſpare Reflections that offer 'emſelves. Before our Author or the *Deiſts* make any Thing of this Argument, they muſt prove, That *Sacrifices univerſally obtain'd, That Sacrifices were every where offer'd to the One True GOD, That thoſe Sacrifices were ſymbolical, of Repentance* as another *Deiſt* has it, and ſeveral other Things taken notice of above.

ARTICLE V.

That there are Rewards and Puniſhments after this Life.

WE are now come to our Author's laſt *Article*. He is not very conſtant in expreſſing himſelf about this *Article*, and how far it was agreed to. Sometimes he pretends, That *theſe Rewards* were *Eternal Happineſs*, and that this was agreed; ſometimes only it was agreed, That there were *Rewards* and *Puniſhments* after this Life; and ſometimes he words it yet more modeſtly, That they *expected Rewards* and *Puniſhments*, either in *this Life* or *after* it. So *P.* 203, when he enters expreſly to treat of this Article, *Et quidem Præmium Bonis & Supplicium Malis, N. B. vel in hac Vita, vel poſt hanc Vitam dari, ſtatuebant Gentiles.* *P.* 171.

And indeed when he comes to tell us, how far is determinable in this Matter by the *Light of Nature*, he makes this *Article* of very little Signification. 'Non imperitè quidem, Bonos Bona, Malos Mala, *vel* 'in Æternum manere affirmabant Veteres. At quis Locum Præ- 'mii, vel Pœnæ oſtenderit? Quis Supplicii Genus conjectaverit? *P.* 210. (And the ſame is perfectly the Caſe as to *Rewards*, tho' our Author waves that, for what Cauſe it is not hard to conjecture) *Quis tandem Durationis Terminum poſuerit?*

All that he pretends to have been receiv'd, was barely this, *That there are Rewards and Puniſhments after this Life.* Let us hear himſelf, "Et quidem præter ſolennem illam Notitiam communem, nempe Deum "Bonum Juſtumq; eſſe, adeoq; Præmium vel Pœnam tum in hac Vita, tum poſt hanc Vitam, *pro Actionibus, imo & Cogitationibus ſuis unicuique remetiri*, "nihil quod *Veriſimile magis* eſſet ab illis ſtatui poſſe decernimus. But he tells us, That by the Additions they made to this, and proceeding to determine further than they knew, even this came to be call'd in Queſtion; (which, by the Way, ruins our Author's Cauſe as to this *Article*) but let himſelf ſpeak, *Dum hæc Philoſophi, illa Sacerdotes, alia demum Poeta adjicerent, tota inclinata in Cafumq; prona nutavit Veritatis* *P.* 210.

Veritatis Fabricâ. Si semet satis coercuissent Gentilium Coriphæi, Neminem, puto, Dissentientem habuissent.

He asserts very little, we see, to have *unniversally obtain'd* as to this *Article*, and he seems to do some more than insinuate, that even, as to *this little*, at least, in Process of Time there were some, and even not a few Dissenters: For I know not what Meaning else to put upon the *whole Fabrick of Truth nodding*, and *inclining to fall*: And this is to quit the Cause. We shall however notice his Arguments, but the more shortly, because of what has been already observ'd.

P. 211. *First* then, He pretends, That the *Perswasion* of this is *innate*, That the Reasons of it are so obvious, and the Argu-
P 4. ments leading to it are so evident, that they could not but agree as to this.

But I have already shown, That every Thing that is evident, or was so to our Author and his Companions and Followers, was not so to the ancient *Sages*. I guess that he learn'd most of these Arguments he insists on from some others than the *Heathen Philosophers*, or if they Manag'd 'em so well, he would have done right to have pointed us to the Places where they have done so. But when he has done, this will not prove an *universal Consent*: For we are concern'd in some others besides Philosophers. As for what he pretends of this *Perswasion's* being *innate*, I think he has said much to disprove it himself: Or if it be, I think the Presages of *future Misery* in the Mind of Man, have been much more strong than of *Happiness*. And in a Word, he only says it was *innate*, but does not prove it. Yea, if this did not *universally* obtain, according to our Author's own Doctrine, it was not *innate*.

Next he insists on the Custom of *Deifying Heroes*, and placing them among the Number of the *Immortal Gods*. This he hints at frequently. But this did not *universally obtain* as to Time or Place, and so hit not the Point in the least. All were not *so dignify'd*, nay, not all that were *good*; nor does it prove, That even all that People, among whom this Custom prevail'd, were of that Opinion; but only the Persons principally concern'd. And indeed it were easy to shew that they were not all of this Opinion, which may possibly be made appear in the next Chapter.

His next Argument is deduc'd from a few Testimonies of *Poets* and *Philosophers* asserting a *future State*, which he has scatter'd up and down, here and there. But what is this to all the World? Do the Poets Fancies of *Elysian Fields*, *Styx* and the like, give us the true Measure of the Sentiments of the World?

Thus

Thus I have view'd our Author's Proofs of his *five Articles*, and their Reception in the World. I have not knowingly omitted any Thing of Moment, advanc'd by him for his Opinion. I ſhall conclude this Chapter with a few general Reflections on our Author's Conduct in this Affair.

I do not a little ſuſpect a Writer of Controverſy, when he hudles up, and endeavours to conceal the State of the Queſtion, and ſhifts it upon Occaſion. It is always a Sign either that his Judgement is naught, or that his Deſigns are not fair and good. I don't believe that our noble Author's Abilities requir'd any ſuch mean Shifts, if the Badneſs of the Cauſe he unhappily undertook, had not oblidg'd him: But that this is the Courſe he ſteers, is evident. Now he ſeems to undertake to ſhew us, what the moſt *univerſal Apprehenſions* of Men were in Matters of *Religion*; and anon, he pretends to tell us what the more diſcerning Perſons, among the *Heathens* thought; and thus ſhifts the Scene, as it is for his Purpoſe.

It is further remarkable, That our Author has cramm'd in a great Deal of philoſophical Learning, which makes nothing at all to the main Purpoſe of the Book. He has write a Book of 230 Pages to prove that theſe *five Articles* obtain'd: Whereas all the Arguments he adduces, ſcarce take up ten of them. The reſt is a Collection of hiſtorical and philological Learning about the *Heathen Gods* and *Worſhip*. He only drops here and there the Shadow of an Argument; and then when we are ſome Pages by it, he tells us he has demonſtate this already, and we are referr'd back to ſome of the preceeding Arguments; and that is, we are bid *ſearch a Needle amongſt a Heap of Hay*. This looks exceeding ſuſpicious like.

Read the Concluſion of our Author's 8. Cap. P. 54. and compare it with the Cap.

Again, I do not like frequent and repeated Aſſertions in a Diſputant without Arguments. Fewer Aſſertions and mo Arguments, if the Cauſe had permitted, would have done better. It is ſaid, That ſome by telling a Ly oft over, comé at length to believe it to be true. I am apt to think that the oft aſſerting over and over again what he undertakes to prove, might go further toward his own Conviction, than all the Arguments that he has advanc'd.

Our Author undertakes to give us an Account what the *Heathens* Thoughts as to *thoſe Articles* were, and what led 'em to theſe Apprehenſions; but after all you ſhall find nothing, but an Account of ſome of their *Practices* with our Author's Gloſſes put on them, and the Reaſon that, not they, but he thinks may be alledg'd in Juſtification of their *Practices* and *Opinions*. If he had dealt fairly, he would have told us

in their own Words, what their Sentiments were, and likewise what were their Inducements that led them into those Opinions; but to obtrude, as every where he doth, his Conjectures and strained Interpretations, as their Meaning, is perfectly intolerable.

'Tis indeed true, That our Author affords us several Quotations from the *Heathens*; but, doth he, by this Means, give us a fair Representation of the Point in Controversy, and their Sentiments about it? No. If his Reader is so simple as to take this for granted, he deceives himself. I know it is the Custom of some others, as well as our Author, tho' perhaps on better Designs, to quot some Passages from *Heathen* Authors, in Order to shew their Agreement with *Christianity*, and shew what a Length the *meer Light of Nature* brought 'em; but hereby they do deceive the Reader: So *Cicero*, his Testimonie to the *Immortality of the Soul*, is alledg'd by our Author, P. 192, "Quemadmodum igitur haut alius Deus, haut "alia Virtus, ab *Gentilibus*, quam ab Nostris, olim celebratur, ita certè "communis utriusque Spes Immortalitatis fuit. Distertim *Cicero* 2. *de. Leg.* "ait, Animi Hominum sunt immortales: Sed fortium Bonorum Divini "& alibi in Lib. *de Senectute* ait: Non est lugenda Mors, quum Immor- "talitas consequitur. Now if any Body should think that this Testimonie of *Cicero* gives a full Account of his Apprehensions about *Immortality*, they would be very far deceiv'd: For in his first Book of *Tusculany Questions*, where he discusses this Point *ex professo*, he discovers indeed an Inclination to believe it, & a Desire that it may be true; yet such a Hesitation about it, that he knows not how to perswade himself of it, as we shall shew perhaps in the next Chapter. In like Manner *Plato* is cited by him, and many others to the same Purpose: But what a sad Uncertainty both *Socrates* and *Plato* were in about this Point, I shall fully demonstrate in the next Chapter. I shall here set down only one notable Instance of the Unfairness of this Way of Procedure. Our Author quotes *Solon's* Testimonie for *future Felicity*, P. 194. Let us hear our Author's own Words, "Pulchram Distinctionem inter Felicem sive Fortunatum & Beatum "affert ex *Solone Herodotus* Lib 1. Ubi *Cræso* respondens, ait Neminem dig- "num esse qui vocetur Beatus antequam τελευτήσει του Βιου ευ; hoc est, Vitam "suam bene clauserit; adeoque ἐυτοχῆ sive Fortunatum hac in Vita, ne- "quaquam ὄλβιον sive Beatum ante Obitum ejus Hominum appellari posse. "Huic concinit *Ovidius*.

Dicique beatus
Ante Obitum Nemo, supremaque Funera Debet.

Propriè

Propriè quippe loquendo, Nemo beatus ante Mortem: Ita ut beati inter Gentiles *vocarentur, qui in Elyſiis Campis ſempiterno Ævo fruerentur.*

Now here we have a Proof to the full, of our Author's Conduct in his Quotations, and the Improvement of them. Was not *Solon* clear that there was a *State of Happineſs* after this Life? Who can doubt it, after our Author has thus prov'd it? But what if *Solon* for all this, confin'd *Happineſs* to *this Life*, defining *the happy Man, One who is competently furniſhed with outward Things, acts honeſtly, and lives temperately*; which Definition no leſs a Perſon than *Ariſtotle* approves. And in all *Solon's* Speech to *Creſus*, there is not one Word, if it were not diſingenuouſly or ignorantly quoted, that gives us the leaſt Ground to believe that *Solon* once ſo much as dream'd of *Happineſs after this Life*. *Stanley* in his Life of *Solon* recites from *Herodotus*, this whole Speech, and the Story to which it relates, *Creſus* King of *Lydia* in *Aſia* the leſs, ſends for *Solon* upon the Fame of his *Wiſdom*: *Solon* comes: The vain King dazled with the Luſture of his Greatneſs, asked the wiſe *Solon*, Whether ever he ſaw any Man happier than himſelf, who was poſſeſs'd of ſo great Riches & Power? *Solon* nam'd ſeverals, particularly *Tellus* the *Athenian* Citizen, *Cleobis* and *Bito*, two Brothers, the Story of whom he relates to *Creſus*, and gives the Reaſons why he he look'd on them as happy, without ever a Hint of their Enjoying any *Happineſs* after this Life. At which *Creſus* was angry, thinking himſelf undervalu'd whereupon *Solon* thus addreſſes him, " Do you enquire, *Creſus*, concerning " humane Affairs of me, who know, That *Divine Providence* is ſevere, and " full of Alteration? In Proceſs of Time, we ſee many Things we would " not; we ſuffer many Things we would not; let us propoſe Seventy " Years, as the Term of Man's Life, which Years conſiſt of 25200 " Days, beſides the additional Month, if we make one Year longer than " another by that Month, to make the Time accord, the additional Months " belonging to thoſe Years, will be Thirty five, and the Days 1050, " whereof one is not in all Things like another: So that every Man, O " *Creſus*, is miſerable! You appear to me very rich, and are King over " many; but the Queſtion you demand, I cannot reſolve, until I " heard you have ended your Days happily; he that hath much Wealth " is not happier than he, who gets his Living from Day to Day, unleſs " Fortune continuing all thoſe Good Things to him, grant that he die well. " There are many Men very Rich, yet unfortunate, many of moderate " Eſtates, fortunate; of whom he who abounds in Wealth, and is not

Stanley's Life of *Solon P.* 26.

Ibid. P. 28, 29.

" happy, exceeds the Fortunate only in two Things; the other, him, in many;
" the Rich is more able to satisfie his Desires and to overcome great In-
" juries; yet the Fortunate excells him, he cannot indeed inflict Hurt on
" others, & satisfie his own Desires; his good Fortune debars him of those:
" But he is free from Evils, healthful, happy in his Children, & beautiful;
" if to this, a Man dies well, that is, he whom you seek, who deserves to
" be called *Happy*; before Death he cannot be stil'd *Happy*, but *Fortunate*;
" yet for one Man to obtain all this is impossible, as one Country cannot
" furnish it self with all Things: Some it hath, others it wants; that,
" which hath most, is best, so in Men, not one is perfect; what one hath,
" the other wants: He who hath constantly most, and, at last, quietly
" departs this Life, in my Opinion, O King, deserves to bear that Name.
" In every Thing we must have Regard to the *End*, whether it tends,
" for many to whom God dispenseth all good Fortunes, he at last utter-
" ly subverts. Thus we see the whole Passage, in which it is evident that *Solon* meant only, That to make a Man *happy*, it is requisite, he continue in the enjoyment of a competency till Death, and that then he die well, that is quietly, & in good Respect or Credit with Men. That this is the Meaning of *dying well* according to *Solon*, is not only evident from the Strain of the Discourse, but from the Stories of *Tellus*, *Cleobis* and *Bito*, whom he instances as *happy Men*, because of their *creditable Deaths*. The *first* he tells us died in Defence of his Country, after he had put his Enemys to Flight, *he dyed nobly*; *and the* Athenians *burried him in the Place, where he fell, with much Honour*. The two Brothers *Cleobis* and *Bito* drew their Mothers Chariot Forty five *Stadia*, and with the Stress died next Morning in the Temple, and so died honourably. And any one that will give himself the Trouble to read *Ovid*'s Story of *Acteon* in his third Book of his *Metamorph.* will see it clear, as the Day, that he meant just the same. He represents how happy one might have thought *Cadmus*, considering how many Things he had that were desirable in his Lot, a *Kingdom*, *Relations* and *Children*, had not *Acteon* his Grand-child's Fate interrupted the Series of his Joyes, and made him miserable: Whereupon the Poet concludes, *Till Death a Man cannot be call'd Happy*, that is, till a Man has, without Interruption, enjoyed a Tract of Prosperity, and dies creditably, without any Mixture of ill Fortune.

Ovid. *Metamorph.* Lib. 3. *Jam stabant* Thebæ: *Poteras jam* Cadme, *videri*
Exilio felix: *Soceri tibi* Marsque Venusque
Contigerant: *Huc adde Genus de Conjuge tanta,*

Tot

Tot Natos, Nataſque, & Pignora cara Nepotes.
Hos quoque jam Juvenes: ſed ſcilicet ultima ſemper
Expectanda Dies Homini eſt, dicique beatus
Ante Obitum Nemo, ſupremaque Funera debet.
Prima Nepos inter Res tot tibi Cadme, *ſecundas*
Cauſa fuit Luctus, &c.

And thus he proceeds to tell the Story of *Acteon*, his being transform'd into a Hart. Thus we ſee with what Candour our Author quotes the *Heathens*. Here he has firſt broke offſome Words, from their Context, whereby the unwary Reader is tempted to believe, That the Speaker meant quite another Thing, than really he did; and then obtrudes this falſe Senſe of one or two Mens Words, who were wiſe Men, and in their Thoughts far above the Vulgar, as the harmonious Meaning of the *Gentile* World.

Nor do I think it ſtrange that our Author could ſerve us ſo, ſeing he was prepoſſeſs'd in Favours of the *Heathens Religion* before he began to read their Books. For he tells us in the Entry of his Book, the very firſt Sentence of it, and more fully in the reſt of the firſt Chapter, That he was at once very concern'd for the *Divine Providence*, and withall fully convinc'd that it could not be maintain'd without there were a *Religion common to all Men*; or as his Words formerly quoted by us, expreſs it, *Unleſs every Man was provided with the Means that were needful for Attaining future Happineſs*, ſo he went to the Books of the *Heathen* under a Perſwaſion that there was a *common Religion* there, could he be ſo lucky to light on it, and therefore no Doubt he drew and ſtrain'd Things to his Purpoſe, both Rites and Words: Thus he begins his Diſcourſe about Expiation; "Quoſdam *P.* 195.
"*Gentilium* Ritus, qui in Senſum ſaniorem *trahi* poſſunt,
"jam tractaturus, *&c.* And indeed he *draws* them to a ſounder Senſe, than ever they put on 'em. But after all, *forc'd Prayers are not good for the Soul*, ſays the *Scots* Proverb. And from one thus prepoſſeſs'd, we can expect no fair Account of the *Gentiles* Sentiments.

Which, by the Way, gives me Occaſion to remark, That, if any one deſires to underſtand the Mind of the *Heathen Philoſophers* and *Sages*, they would read 'em themſelves, or *Heathens* Accounts of their *Lives* and *Actions*, rather than thoſe done by *Chriſtians*; becauſe very oft, when *Chriſtians* write their *Lives*, they have ſome Deſign, and they ſtrain every Thing in the *Philoſophers* to a Compliance either with

their

their Designs or Apprehensions; The *Heathen Writers*, being again under no Influence from the Scripture Light, do plainly narrate Things as they are, not being so sensible of what Things may reflect really upon the Persons concerning whom they write, the *Light of Nature* not representing clearly that *Wickedness*, which is in many of their Actions and Opinions, and scruple not to tell them out plainly; whereas, *Christians* being aware how odious such and such Practices or Principles are, scare to tell such Things of those famous Men, as they were really guilty of; because they know how deep a Stain it will leave on 'em, by those who are taught the *Evil* of 'em by the *Scriptures*.

I shall add this Reflection more: If any one would conclude from our Author's Confidence, in some Places of his Book, where he talks of many Reasons that he has advanc'd, and that he has demonstrate this and that; if, I say, from this they would infer, That he was fully perswaded in his own Mind, about these *five Articles*, that they *universally obtain'd* and are *sufficient*, he would very far mistake our Author, who, throughout his Book, sufficiently bewrays his *Uncertainty* about 'em, and that he wanted not a *Fear*, least it should not be true, as some Things afterwards to be pleaded, will show. But least this should seem to be said altogether without Ground, I shall single out one Instance of our Author's Wavering in this Matter, reserving others to another Occasion, It is P. 19. where, after our Author has discours'd of the *more famous Names* of the *true God*, and shew'd that the *Gentiles* apply'd them all, save one, to the *Sun*, he concludes thus, " Hæc saltem " fuere Solenniora summi Dei Nomina inter *Hebræos* extantia, quæ " etiam ad Solem, *Sabazio* excepto, a *Gentilibus* reducta fuisse, ex Supra- " allatis Conjecturam facere licet. Adeo ut quamvis superius Sole Nu- " men sub hisce præsertim Vocabulis coluerunt *Hebræi*, Solem neque ali- " ud Numen intellexerunt *Gentiles*, *nisi fortasse in Sole*, tanquem præ- " claro Dei summi Specimine, & sensibili ejus, ut *Plato* vocat, Simu- " lacro, Deum summum ab illis cultum fuisse censeas: Quod non fa- " cilè abnuerim, præsertim cum Symbolica fuerit omnis ferè Religio " Veterum. But perhaps, tho' our Author was not well confirm'd in his Opinion, when he began his Book, yet he came to some more Fix'dness before he got to the End of it. Well, let us hear him, in his Censure of the *Gentiles Religion* in the last Chapter of his Book: Where speaking of the *Worshipping of the Heavens*, the *Sun*, *&c.* P. 223. he gives his Judgment thus, " De hoc quidem Dog- " mate, idem ac de priore censeo: Nempe, *nisi* Sym- " bolicus

"bolicus fuerit, erroneum mihi prorſus videri Cultum illum. Cæ-
"terum quod Symbolici fuerunt Olim hujuſmodi Cultus, multæ, quas
"Supra adduximus, *ſuadere videntur* Rationes: Sed ſuo Judicio heic
"quoque utatur Lector. What more Uncertainty could any bewray, than in thoſe Words our Author doth? And indeed here we have enough to overthrow his whole Book: For if this *firſt Article* fall, all will fall with it, as we may ſee afterwards.

But it is now Time that we draw to a Concluſion of this Chapter, having ſufficiently enervated our Author's Arguments, ſo far as we could diſcern them: If any of them ſeem to be omitted; I preſume they will be found to be of no great Conſideration, and of an eaſy Diſpatch to any that is acquaint with this Controverſy. Our Author's Way of Writing made it ſomewhat difficult to find his Arguments. And indeed upon ſerious Reflection, I can ſcarce underſtand at what our Author aim'd in this Way of Writing. He could never rationally expect that this would clear the Subject he had undertaken. I had almoſt concluded that his Deſign behoov'd to be an Oſtentation of Knowledge of the *Heathens Religion*, in Order to make his Authority have the more Weight, and to dare People from intertaining a different Opinion concerning the *Religion* of the *Heathen World*, from that which one who had ſo induſtriouſly ſearch'd into their Writings, own'd. But if this was it, our Author has miſs'd it. And I think inſtead of doing the *Deiſts* Cauſe any Service this Way, he has rather hurt it: For every one that ſhall peruſe this Work with Attention, and find how great our Author's Learning, Diligence and Induſtry have been, and yet how little he has been able to do, they will infer the Weakneſs of the Cauſe he has undertaken, and conclude, That the Cauſe could bear no better Defence, and that therefore a weak and indefencible Cauſe has baffl'd our Author's great Abilities, and Application. For

---------- *ſi Pergama Dextrâ*
Defendi poſſent, etiam hac Defenſa fuiſſent.

C. Blount and they who have come after our Author, as has been ſaid, do but copy after him, and take his Notions upon Truſt, but others will be ſomewhat more wiſe, and will look whom they truſt in a Matter of this Importance.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Wherein it is made appear that Herbert's five Articles *did not* universally obtain.

WE have in the preceeding Chapter sufficiently shew'd how weak our noble Author's Proofs are of his *universal Religion*. It now remains that we prove that what he pretends is indeed false. Our work here is far more easy, than what our Author undertook. He asserts that *Providence* cannot be maintain'd, unless all mankind are provided in the Means needful for attaining *future Happiness*, and he is likewise clear, That less cannot be allowed *sufficient* for this End, than the *five Articles* mention'd, wherefore he pretends that all the World agreed in owning those. Now to have made this last appear, it was needful it should be proven by Induction of all particular Nations, that they thus agreed, and that as to all Times; but this would have been somewhat too laborious. We maintain that all did not agree in the Acknowledgment of those *five Articles*: And this is evinc'd, if we can shew any one Nation dissenting from any one of them. But we shall not be so nice upon the Point, as only to mention one Nation, or disprove *one Article*. Let us take a separate View of each Article, and see what the Judgment of some Nations were concerning 'em.

ARTICLE I.

All the World did not agree in owning the One True Supreme God.

I Might for Proof of this only desire any Person to read our Author's Book, and there he would find this sufficiently clear. But I shall shortly confirm it to the Conviction of any, who has not a Mind to shut his Eyes, by the few following Observations as to the World's Sentiments in this Case.

1. It is most evident to any one, who will give himself the Trouble to read

read never so little of the Writings of the *Gentiles*, That many Nations, I had almost said most Nations, did hold *a Plurality of Eternal and Independent Beings*, on whom they depended, and which they call'd *Gods* in the properest Sense of the Word. *Herodotus*, quoted by our Author, tells us, *That all the* Affricans *worship the Sun & Moon only*, "Soli & Lunæ solummodo sacrificant, & quidem *Afri* universi. And *Plato*, quoted likewise by our Author, a few Pages after, in his *Dialogue*, which he calls *Cratylus*, tells us, "Qui *Græciam* primi incoluêre, ii videntur mihi illos *solum* Deos "existimasse, quos nunc etiam Barbari multi pro Diis habent, Solem, Lunam, Terram, Astra, Cœlum. Of this also the ancient Inscriptions mention'd by our Author, and more particularly by *Hornbeck* in his Treatise *De Conversione Gentilium*, is a Proof, "Soli invicto & Lunæ Æternæ Deo soli invicto *Mythræ* & omnipotenti Deo *Mythræ*. *Mythras* was a Name given to the Sun by the *Persians*, as our Author proves. And if we may believe *Maimonides*, the *Sabeans* own'd no God save the Stars. "Notum est *Abrahamum* Patrem nostrum educatum esse in Fide *Sabæorum*, qui statuerunt nullum esse Deum, præter Stellas. Nor were the *Egyptians* of another Mind. *Diodorus*'s Testimoney is worth our Notice to this Purpose, "Igitur primi illi Homines Olim in *Ægypto* geniti, hinc Mundi "Ornatum conspicientes, admiranteque universorum Naturam, duos esse Deos, & *eos Æternos* arbitratri sunt, Solem & Lunam: Et illum quidem *Osiridem*, hanc *Isidim* certa Nominis Ratione appellarunt.

P. 36. *de Rel. Gent.*

P. 39.

P. 26.

Hornbeck P. 19.

More Nevochim, *referente*. Hornbec *ubi supra. P.* 17.

Owen *Theolog. Lib.* 3. *Cap.* 5.

Herbert *P.* 39.

Thus we see what the Apprehensions of several Nations were, and how harmonious they are in Dissenting from our Author's Assertion. It had been easy to have alledg'd many mo Testimonies even from our Author against himself: But we aim at Brevity.

II. It is not improbable, that some Nations, tho' they might allow some Priority of one of their *Gods* to the rest, yet did not think that there was any such great Inequality, at least, amongst there more notable *Deities*, as could infer the Supremacy of one to the rest, and their Dependence on, and Subordination to him. We find every where equal Honours pay'd, equal or very little different Titles of Respect given to the

Sun or *Moon*. So that 'tis very likely, tho' they might give the *Sun* the Preference in Point of Order, yet they did not apprehend any such great Inequality, as seems needful betwixt one *supreme Being* & his *Dependents*. The People of *Mexico* in *America*, tho' they worship many *Gods*, yet look on their two principal Ones, whom they call *Vitzilophuchtli* & *Tezcatlipuca*, as two Brothers. " *Mexicani* primo colere soliti fuerunt immanem De-
Hornbeck *P.* 70. " orum Turbam, Bis Mille referunt, inter quos duo
Ibid. " præcipui *Vitzilopuchtli* & *Tezcatlipuca* duo Fratres, " quorum alter Rerum Providentiæ, alter Bellis præerat. And the Inhabitants of *Darien*, St. *Martha* and other Places thereabout, own only the *Sun*, and the *Moon* as his Wife. Further it is own'd by our Author several Times, That many Nations hold two *first Beings*, one *Good*, and another *Evil*, whom they call'd *Ve-Jupiter*, and by the *Persian Magi* he was call'd *Arimanius*. Tho' our Author thinks
De Rel. Gent. P. 163. a softer Construction is to be put on their Meaning, than to charge them with Making their *Ve-Jupiter* equal with the *Good God*: But we know our Author must not be allow'd to interpret, unless he can give good Grounds for his Opinion about the Meaning of the *Gentiles*, which in this Case he doth not once attempt, and we know that some look'd on this *wicked Principle* as the *Supreme*, as we shall show anon, and I think it will be hard to clear some of them, yea even no less a Person than *Plutarch*, from making them *Equal* & both *Infinite*; if we may believe
Nichol's *Confer.* *P.* 2. *P.* 57. a late Author, who tells us, " That as for *Plutarch*, " one of the sobereſt of the *Philosophers*, he was " the horridest *Poly-theist* of them all; for he asserts " *two Supreme Anti-gods*; one infinitely Good, and the other infinitely Evil. Moreover, some of the *Deists* do not think
Orac. *of Reas. P.* 194. this Opinion destitute of Probability, as we have noted above. But whatever there is as to this, yet

III. It is certain that many of them, notwithstanding the hudge Number of *Gods* they maintain'd, were yet utterly ignorant of the *true God*. This is so evident, that I cannot but wonder at our Author's Impudence in Denying it, especially, after the Testimonys we have already quoted from him. We have heard already that the *Egyptians* and *Grecians* of old own'd no other *Gods* besides the *Sun*, *Moon* and *Stars*. And we have heard the same of the *Sabeans*, several *Americans* and Inhabitants

habitants of *Africa*; and *Ceſar* tells us the ſame of the *Germans*; " Deorum Numero eos Solum ducunt, " quos cernunt, & quorum Opibus apertè juva- " mur, *Solem* & *Vulcanum* & *Lunam*; reliquos ne " Fama quidem acceperunt. *De Bello Gallico Lib. 6.* Yea, our Author is forc'd to make a fair Confeſſion, and contradict himſelf in the Entry of his fourth Chap. where Speaking of the *Gentiles* and *their Worſhiping of the Sun*, he delivers himſelf thus, " Incongruum " demum exiſtimaverant, ut qui Cultum ab omnibus " flagitaret, a Cultoribus ſuis ſeſe abſconderet Deus. Solem igitur " Deum fere omnes *Gentiles* ſtatuebant, non Summum quidem, ſed " Summo proximum, ejuſque præclariſſimam Iconem, licet alii Mun- " dum totum, tanquam Deo plenum, ſummi Numinis Imaginem ſpeci- " oſam apprimè præ ſe ferre contenderent. *De Rel. P. 20.* Here ye ſee our Author poſitive, that they put not the *Sun* in the Room of the *One True God*: None of them did it; but ye ſhall hear him in the very next Sentence tell us, That they did diſcard the *true God*, and very Abſurdly put another in his Place. " Certe uti olim dictum *(ſays our Author)* qui " Solem Vice ſummi Dei coluerunt, perinde fecere, ac illi qui ad Aulam " potentiſſimi Principis accedentes, quem primum Amictu ſplendido " indutum cernerent, Regium illi Cultum deferendum exiſtimaverant. And our Author knows full well, That at *Athens* there was an Altar erected to *the unknown God*, and *Paul* expreſly tells 'em, That this *unknown God* was the *true God*. *Whom therefore ye ignorantly Worſhip, him declare I unto you.* What ſays our Author to this? He directly contradicts the Apoſtle, and then makes him a Complement, that is well nigh to Nonſence. " Cæterum, *ſays he*, duriuſculè *Deus ignotus Athenienſium* ad " Deum *Judæorum* refertur: Ut ita priora S. S. loca Deum *Gentilium* " eundem ac communem omnium Deum evincant. Nam Deus ille ig- " notus *Athenienſium alius certè fuit*, (*this is a plain Contradiction to the* " *Apoſtle's Aſſertion*) atque ideo puto Arâ donatus, ne aliquis forſan in- " cultus apud illos eſſet Deus: *Ut bellè tamen hinc inſtruendi* Gentiles " *Occaſionem captarit Apoſtolus.* Neque Dubium mihi eſt, quin e Li- " bro Naturæ edocti Deum ſummum tum agnoverint, tum colue- " rint *Gentiles.* Thus we ſee *quam bellè*, how pleaſantly our Author proceeds. He tells us that it is hard to think, tho' the Apoſtle expreſly ſays ſo, That this *unknown God* was the God of the *Jews*. But if we will not ſtand to our Author's *Say*, then he tells us what ſome Scriptures he had formerly cited, prove; *viz. Act.* 10. *paſſim Act.* 17. 28, 29. *Rom.*

1. 19. But we have above shew'd, That these are not for our Author's Purpose. Well, what then remains? Nothing, but only this: *I have no Doubt*, says he, *but they knew the true God.* But our Author's Certainty will not satisfy another; and we just now shew'd, That our Author was not so fully sure, as he pretends to be in this Place. But yet our Apostle, he tells, took very handsomly Occasion hence to instruct the *Gentiles*, that is, if we believe our Author, he took Occasion from a false Supposition to instruct them. But this is Kindness that he us'd any Complement, tho' a ridiculous one. But leaving this, I go on.

IV. They among the *Nations*, who own'd *One Supreme God*, did frequently, if not for most Part, put some others in the Room of the *true God*. Some made the World *God*. This is what *Mihi P.* 70. *Balbus* the *Stoick* sets up for with all his might in *Cicero*'s second Book *de Nat. Deor.* throughout. "At- "que certè nihil omnium Rerum melius est *Mundo*, nihil præstabilius, "nihil pulchrius: Nec solum nihil est, sed ne cogitari quidem quic- "quam melius potest: Et si Ratione & Sapientiâ nihil est melius, ne- "cesse est hæc inesse in eo, quod *Optimum* esse con- *P.* 83. "cedimus: And therefore a little after he concludes the *World*, *God*. *Cicero* himself was of the same Mind: For, when *Velleius* the *Epecurean* had been heard and refuted by *Cotta* the Academick: And *Epicurus* his wild Opinions about the Gods, had been fully expos'd, which is the Subject of the *first Book*; *Balbus* the *Stoick* proposes and defends the *Stoicks* Opinion about the *Nature*, *Being*, *Number* of the Gods, and their *Providence*, and defends it after the best Fashion he can (where by the Way, there is not one Word of the *true God*, but a full Discovery of the grossest Ignorance of him, and the greatest Wickedness and Folly in Asserting a *Plurality of Gods*, and Parting all the *Excellencies* of the *true God* among them) This makes up the *second Book*. In the *third Book*, *Cotta* the Academick disputes against, and exposes the *Stoicks* Opinions, as defended by *Balbus*; and in the last Sentence of the Book, *Cicero* gives his ἐπικρισις or Censure of the whole in these Words. "Hæc cum essent dicta, ita discessimus, "ut *Vellei Cottæ* Disputatio verior, mihi *Balbi* ad Veritatis Similitudinem "videretur esse propensior. *Velleius* the *Epicurean* favours *Cotta*, who disprov'd the whole Opinions about the Gods, & put no better in their Place. And *Cicero* was pleas'd with *Balbus*, who maintain'd the *Stoicks* Sentiments. What they were we have just now noted. And whether *Plato*, *Aristotle*, yea and *Socrates* were not of this Opinion, is not so very clear.

Certain

Certain it is, that they pay'd a little too great Reſpect to the *World*, if they were not. Let us hear our Author. *Plato in Timæo et Legibus dicit & Mundum Deum eſſe & Cœlum & Aſtra, &c.* But whatever were their Sentiments, it is not of ſo great Conſequence to the Queſtion under Conſideration, to ſpend Time in enquiring, ſince it is evident that many were of this Opinion. Others thought that the *Heaven* was *God*, and this is own'd by *Ennius* the Poet, quoted by our Author, in that noted Verſe ſo frequently mentioned by *Cicero*, *Aſpice hoc ſublime candens, quem omnes invocant* Jovem: And there alſo he tells us of an old Inſcription found at *Rome*, *Optimus Maximus Cœlus Æternus*: Thus we ſee the *Heavens* dignify'd with thoſe very Epithets, which our Author pretends to have been peculiar to the *Supreme God*. And he tells us, That ſome are of Opinion, that *Pythagoras* inclin'd this Way: And our Author leaves it in Doubt. If *Ariſtotle* & *Plato* were not of this Mind, *That the Heavens were the Supreme God*, as we ſee ſome others were; yet they did own *Heaven* for *God*, & to be worſhipped as ſuch. " Sed non ſo- " lummodo Cœlum Divino Honore colendum decre- " verant Sacerdotes, ſed et ipſi Philoſophi celebriores, adeo ut non *Sta-* " *girita* tantum, ſed *Eminus* ejus Præceptor ita ſtatuerint. But the moſt prevalent Opinion was, *That the Sun was the one true and ſupreme God*: That many, and perhaps moſt Nations thought ſo, the Teſtimonies above-alledg'd fully prove, and we have hear'd our Author confeſſing it as to ſome. I ſhall only add a few Remarks more to this Purpoſe. There is a Quotation of *Macrobius*, which I find in our Author, that is worth noticing, " *Aſſyrii* (inquit *Macr.*) quem " Deum ſummum maximumq; venerantur, *Adad* " Nomen dederunt, ejus Nominis Interpætatio ſigni- " ficat *Unus*. Hunc ergo ut potentiſſimum adorant Deum, ſed ſubjun- " gunt Deam Nomine *Atergatin*; omnemque Poteſtatem hiſce duobus " attribuunt, *ſolem Teramque* intelligentes. And our Auther further acquaints us as the *Perſians*, " Quod " *Perſæ* duo Principia ſtatuebant, *Oromazen* ſcil. tan- " quem boni Fontem: *Et Arimanium*, mali. -- Inter quos medium & qua- " ſi Arbitrum poſuere *Solem*. I have in the Cloſe of our former Chapter, quoted a notable Paſſage from our Author to the ſame

De Rel. Gent. P. 39.

P. 54

Ibid.

Ibid.

P. 19

P. 24.

P. 28.

Pur-

This is fully proved by Dr. Owen, Hornbeck *and others in their Books formerly referr'd to.*

Purpose, wherein he tells us, That all the *Names* of the *true God*, were ascribed to the *Sun*. Of the same Opinion were the *Phenicians*, *Britains* of old, and their fam'd *Druides*, and perhaps most Nations. Yea, so deeply did this fix its Roots in the Minds of most, that the greatest amongst the *Heathen Philosophers* can scarce be freed from an Inclination this Way. *Plato* tells us, how devout *Socrates* was in the Worship of the *Sun*, and that several Times he fell into an Extasie, while thus imploy'd. Nor are the famous *Indian Philosophers* one white more wise. " Not only the *Brach-* " *mans*, but all the *Indians*, yea and the fam'd *Appol-* " *lonius* (whom the *Heathens* compar'd to our blessed LORD, most blas- " phemously and groundlesly) worshipp'd the *Sun*: And we have *Appol-* " *lonius*'s Prayer to the *Sun*, recorded by *Philostratus* in his Life *Lib.* 1. O summe Sol, *eó me Terrarum mitte, quo me profecturum esse cognoscis, & concede, precor, ut Viros bonos agnoscam; Improbos vero neq; agnoscam, neq; agnoscar ab illis.* Yea after the Light of the glorious Gospel had clear'd the *Philosophers* Eyes, and made them ashamed of much of their Religion, yet even the *Platonick Philosophers* could not quit the Thoughts of the *Sun*'s being *God*.

See Owen's *Theolog. Lib.* 3. *Cap.* 4. *P.* 182.

Horbeck *P.* 31.

Owen *ubi supra Lib.* 3. *Cap.* 5. *P.* 194.

But not only did some look on the *Sun* as the *Supreme God*; but if we may believe *Hornbeck*, who was at great Pains to understand the Religions of the World, and particularly of *America*; several Nations in *America*, particularly the Inhabitants of *New-france*, and they who inhabit about the River *Sagadahoc*, worship principally the *Devil* or a *malignant Spirit*.

Hornbeck *de Conver.* Gentil. *Lib.* 1. *C.* 9. *P.* 70, 71.

Thus we have fully demonstrate what we undertook, and hereby quite spoil'd the whole Story of an *universal Religion*: And our Author has been so unhappy, as to lay to our Hands many of the Arguments, whereby we have disprov'd his own Position. This Step being once gain'd, we shall be more brief in the Consideration of the remaining *Articles*: For they all fall with this. If there is a Mistake as to this, there can remain nothing sincere in *Religion*. If the *true God* is not *known*, he can not be *worshipp'd*, and *Rewards* and *Punishments* cannot be *expected* from him; nor can we be sensible of, or sorry for any Offence done against him

him. So that we might ſtop here, as having ruin'd wholly that Cauſe our Author undertook to defend: But we ſhall conſider the reſt alſo.

ARTICLE II.

It was not univerſally agreed, That the One True GOD *is to be* Worſhipped.

HOW could they agree as to the *Worſhipping* him, whom they did not know to be? If it would not fright the Perſons concern'd, I might here pertinently ask them the Queſtion, the Apoſtle puts *Rom.* 10. 14. *How ſhall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? And how ſhall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?*

And further, even they who own'd *one ſupreme God*, many of them intertain'd ſuch Notions of him, as made him unworthy of any Worſhip. He tells us that many of them lock'd him up in Heaven, denying his *Providence*; and one would almoſt think our Author had been of their Opinion, while he tells us, *Rectè dictum eſt olim, quod Æternum Beatumque eſt, nec Negotii quicquam habere, nec exhiberi alteri.* But whatever our Author's Thoughts were, it is well known, that this Opinion prevail'd very far, and obtain'd amongſt many, if not moſt Nations, who own'd *one Supreme God*, beſides the *Sun*. And they were further of Opinion, That God had committed the whole Management of the World to Deputies. Our Author informs us, That the Ancient *Heathen*'s divided their Gods into *Superceleſtial*, *Celeſtial* and *Subceleſtial*: And he tells us, That the *chief God*, and his Companions, the *Superceleſtial Gods* have not only ſuch Concernment in, or Regard to the Things that are tranſacted in this World, as to make 'em take any Notice of them: And that the *Supreme God* has withdrawn himſelf, and the *Superceleſtial Gods* from the View of *Mortals*, as being of too ſublime a Nature to be known by them: And that he has deputed the *Sun*, *Moon* and *Stars* to inſpect the World, as the only *Gods* who can be injoyed by Men. "Deum ſummum vero ſe- "ipſum ſupercœleſteſq; Deos a Conſpectu Mortalium "removiſſe, quod ſublimis adeo eſſent Naturæ, ut nulla eos Acies ſatis "pertingeret, ejus Loco non in Conſpectum ſolùm, ſed in Fruitionem "quandam produxiſſe Deos illos cœleſtes, qui a nobis *Sol*, *Luna*, "*Cœlum*, &c. vocantur. And the *Indian Bramines* ſeem indeed to

De Rel. Gent. P. 174.

P. 170.

P. 171.

hold

Hornbeck *P.* 40. be of this Mind, as we know the whole followers of *Epicurus* were. Yea, the Inhabitants of *Calecut* a Kingdom in the *East-Indies*, are so absurd, as to imagine that the *Devil* is God's *Deputy*, to whom the Government of the World is committed: And hence they Worship the *Devil* principally, (as likewise do the Kingdoms of *Decam* and *Narsinga*) and " their King has in " in his Oratory the Image of the *Devil* with a Crown " on his Head, so very frightful, that the most Re- " solute tremble at the Sight of it: The Wall is all " painted with lesser Devils; and in each Corner " stands one of Brass, so well done, that it seems all in Flames. Now if such Notions are entertain'd of God, it is no Wonder tho' he be by many thought not worth the worshipping. The Consequences of those Apprehensions I cannot better express, than *Cicero* has done in the very Beginning of his first Book *de Nat. Deorum.* " Sunt enim Philosophi, & " fuerunt, qui omnino nullam habere censerent humanarum Rerum Pro- " curationem Deos: Quorum si vera Sententia est, quæ potest esse Pie- " tas? Quæ Sanctitas? Quæ Religio? si Dei neque possunt nos juvare, " nec volunt, nec curant omnino, nec quid agamus animadvertant; nec " est quod ab his ad Hominum Vitam permanare possit: Quod est, " quod ullos Diis immortalibus Cultus, Honores, Preces adhibeamus? And much more to the same Purpose. Tho' he speakes of a *Plurality of Gods*, yet what he says, holds true as to the Case in Hand: For if we intertain, or if the *Gentiles* did intertain, as we see some of them did, such Notions of their *Supreme God*, as he here speaks of, the same Consequences must follow; & it is not credible that any, who thought so, could judge the *Supreme God worthy* of *Worship*. And indeed we find them no Way concern'd about it.

See Calecut *in great Geogr. Diction.*

In fine, Not a few of the wiser Sort, who intertain'd the most just Thoughts of God of any, yet being in the Dark as to the Way of *Worshipping* God, have declar'd against any *Worship*, at least in Practice, till it should by himself be condescended on. Thus it is as to the wiser Sort among the *Chinese*.--" De Deo eoque colendo non sunt soliciti.

Horbeck *ubi supra P.* 47. " Unum quidem agnoscunt Summum Numen, a quo om- " nia conservari & regi credunt: Sed, quia quomodo " coli velit, ignorare se profitentur; satius autumant " Cultum ejus omittere, quam in eo designando errare. And perhaps the best *Philosophers* in other Nations, were not of a different Mind. Thus we see how far they were from being agreed about *this Article*.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE III.

The Gentile World were not agreed in judging that Vertue *and* Piety *are the Principal Parts of the Worſhip of God.*

HOW it ſhould come into our Author's Head to think that they were agreed, is a little ſtrange, conſidering how little is to be found among their Writers that looks this Way. But I ſuppoſe the Caſe was this, He had concluded that they were agreed about the *Being* of *one true God*, and to make his Religion compleat, he behooved to have them ſome Way agreed about his *Worſhip* too. But he found 'em endleſly divided about their *ſolemn Worſhip*, and none of it directed to the *one true God*, but all expreſly aim'd at other Things: Wherefore there was no other Thing left that could be to his Purpoſe, and therefore he finding that there was ſomewhat that all the World agreed in, paying ſome Reſpect to, at leaſt, in Words, under the Name of *Vertue*; he would needs appropriate this to the *true God* for his *Worſhip*, tho' he has no Warrant from the *Gentiles* to do ſo. And truly after all, if this was the *Worſhip* of the *true God*, or deſign'd as ſuch, whatever Agreement there might be in Opinion about the *Worſhip* of the *one true* G O D I think there was none in *Practice*, if not in a total Neglect of it: For how few were there, who can have the leaſt Pretence to challenge that Name amongſt all thoſe, whoſe Names have been tranſmitted to us? How true was the Poet *Juvenal*'s Obſervation,

> *Rari quippe Boni, Numero vix ſunt totidem quot*
> *Thebarum Portæ, divitis vel Oſtia Nili.*

But to leave this, and come to the Point in Hand ſomewhat more cloſely,

I. It is evident that the World was very far from being agreed, That there is *one God*: Far more were they divided about the Acknowledgment of the *true God*, and whom they ſhould own as ſuch. It was therefore utterly impoſſible that they ſhould condeſcend on this, as a *principal Part* of the *Worſhip* of God, whom they did not know to have any *Being*.

II. So far were they from looking on *Vertue* as the *principal Part* of the *Worſhip* of the *Gods*, whom they own'd, that the *Worſhip* of many of their *Gods*, was thought to conſiſt in Things that were croſs to the

See this fully proven in the learn'd and excellent Dr. Owen's *Treatise* de Justitia vindicatrice *from P. 66 to 100, by authentick Testimonys, with such Remarks as may be worth the reading.*

plainest Dictates of *Nature*'s *Light*. Our Author acquaints us frequently with the *Obscenities*, the *Cruelties*, and other *Extravagancies* of their *Worship*. The *Obscenities* are too fulsom to be repeated. The *furious Extravagancies*, *religious*, or rather *superstitious Fury* and *Madness* us'd in the *Worship* of *Bacchus*, are known to every one. And for their *Cruelty*, who knows not that humane Sacrifices were almost universally us'd? Some offer'd *Captives*, some offer'd *Strangers*, some sacrificed their dearest *Relations* and *Children*, and that in the most cruel Manner.

III. We need go no further than our Author's Book, to learn, That most Nations were so far from looking on *Vertue* as *any Part* of the *Worship* due to any of those Gods they own'd, that they plac'd it wholly in such other Things, as our Author, amongst others, has given us a large Account of.

IV. They, who were most zealous for *Vertue*, were very far from looking on it as a *Part* of the *Worship of God*, or directing it to *his Glory*. I believe our Author, were he alive, for all his reading, would find it difficult to find one fair Testimony to this Purpose. They look'd not on themselves as Debitors to God for their *Vertue*. Hence *Cotta*, after he has acknowledg'd that we are indebted to *God* for our *Riches* and *eternal Enjoyments*, adds; "Virtutem "autum Nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit, "nimirum recte: Propter Virtutem enim laudantur, "& in Virtute rectè gloriamur; quod non contin-

Cic. *de Nat. Deor. P. mihi* 187. *Lib.* 3.

"geret, si id Donum a Deo haberemus. ---- *Hence a little after, adds he,* "Nam quis quod bonus Vir esset, Gratias Diis egit unquam! And much more to the same Purpose. They thought that their *Vertue* made them equal to their Gods. "Hoc est "quod Philosophia mihi promittit, ut me parem Deo faciat. *Yea not only so, but they pretended their* Vertues *plac'd them above their Gods.* "Est aliquid, quo Sapiens "antecedat Deum, ille Naturæ Beneficio, non suo, Sa-

Seneca *Epist.* 48. *Idem Epist.* 53. *Epist.* 73.

"piens est. *And again,* Deus non vincit Sapientem "Felicitate, etiamsi vincit Ætate: Non enim est Virtus major, quæ longior. *Hence they will not have us so much as to pray to God, either as to* Vertue *or* Felicity. *it is a mean Thing to weary the Gods.* "Quid Votis Opus est? "Facto felicem. *And much more to the same Purpose.*

Epist. 31.

ARTICLE

ARTICLE IV.

It did not universally obtain, That Repentance *is a sufficient Expiation; or, That we must repent for Offences done against the* true God.

OUR Author has acknowledged, That there is rarely Mention of this amongst the Ancients: and we have already, by Quotations from him, cleared that the *Ancient Heathens* did not think it a *sufficient Expiation*. and indeed that it was of no great Consideration among them, is sufficiently evident from their not taking any Notice of it, even when the fairest Occasions present themselves. And finally, there can be nothing more certain, than that their *Repentance* could not aim at the Offence done to the true God, of whom many of them were utterly ignorant. But what has been said is sufficient to shew that it did not *universally* obtain in any Sense, that can turn to any Account to the *Deists*.

ARTICLE V.

It was not universally agreed, That there are Rewards *and* Punishments *after this Life.*

I. HOwever many there were that maintain'd the *Immortality* of the Souls of Men, it is certain, that there were very many Dissentients, who were of a different Mind, and that of all Sorts of People.

The fam'd *Sects* among the *Indians*, which they call *Schaerwaecha Pasenda* and *Tschectea*, if we may believe *Hornbeck* in his Account of them, all deny a future State. Hornbeck, *P.* 34. *ubi supra.*

Nor are wise *Chinese*, at least many of them, of a different Mind. They are divided in *three Sects*. The *first Sect* of their *Philosophers* are the Followers of the fam'd *Confucius*, their Morals are refin'd, as perhaps these of the most polite Parts of the World, if not more. But as to the Soul, they seem to make it a Part of God, which at Death returns to that first Principle, whence it was broke off. Let us hear *Possevinus*'s Account of them; as to this Matter he

Hornbeck, *P.* 47, 48. says, They maintain " Hominis Cor esse unum & " eandem Rem cum illo primo Rerum Principio "; " cumque Homo moritur, Cor perire prorsus & ab- " sumi, superesse tamen ex eo primum Principium, quod Vitam ante " conferebat. *And further, they maintain,* Posse Hominem in hac Vita " summam Principii cognoscendi Perfectionem adipisci, & meditando " pervenire ad maximam Vitæ Tranquillitatem, & hoc esse summum " Bonum, quod donec obtineat, continuo Motu agatur, & de Inferno " uno in alium conjiciatur, usque dum contemplando & meditando " ad Fastigium pervenerit Tranquillitatis, quæ in Principio illo primo est. These are the Apprehensions of their best *Moralists.*

Ib. P. 48, 49. " But there are other *two Sects,* that plainly declare against a *future State,* are for the *Mortality of the Soul,* and have no Prospect beyond Time.

Cicero *Tusc. Quest.* 1. *P.* 329. Of this same Opinion were not on single Person, but many Sects of the ancient *Philosophers,* whom *Cicero* mentions, and concludes his Account of them thus. ----- " His Sententiis omnibus nihil " post Mortem pertinere ad quemquam potest : Pariter enim cum " Vita Sensus amittitur. And a little after, speaking of the Opposition made to *Plato*'s Opinion about the *Immortality of the Soul,* he says,

Ib. P. 340. " Sed plurimi contra (*Platonis* scil. *Sententiam*) nituntur, " Animosq; quasi Capite damnatos Morte mulctant. And some Passages after, speaking of the same Opinion, he says, " Catervæ veniunt " Contradicentium, non solum *Epicureorum,* quos equidem non despicio, sed " nescio quomodo doctissimus quisque contemnit. Accerimè autem Deli- " ciæ meæ dicæ Archus, contra hanc Immortalitatem disseruit : Is enim " tres Libros scripsit, qui *Lesbiaci* vocantur, quod *Mytelinis* Sermo " habetur : In quibus vult officere Animos esse Mortales : *Stioci* autem " Usuram nobis tanquam Cornicibus : Diu mansuros aiunt, Animos " semper regant.

Nor were they otherwise minded, many of them in *Greece.* When *Socrates* vents his Opinion of the *Immortality of the Soul,* that Day before he died, *Cebes* on of his Disciples, who is the Conferrer, or one of them, at least, that maintains the Discourse with him, addresses him in those Words, " *Socrates,* I subscribe to the Truth of all you have said. There is only one Thing that Men look upon as incredible, *viz.* What you advanced of the Soul : for almost every Body fancies, that " when the Soul parts from the Body, it is no " more,

Plato's Phedon *done into English from M.* Dacier's *Trans. V.* 2. *P.* 100

" more, it dies along with it; in the very Minute of Parting it evanishes like a Vapour or Smoke, which flies off and dispersés, and has " no Existence.

Yea, *Pliny*, *Strabo* and many others declare against the *Immortality of the Soul*; nay, *Pliny* on set Purpose, disputes against it. Oweni *Theolog. Lib.* 1. *C. P.* 174.

And the Poets go the same Way. It were easy to multiply Proofs of this from them. *Seneca* speaks the Mind of many of them, tho' perhaps not his own. *Trojæ. Troa A.* 1.

Post Mortem nihil est, ipsaque Mors nihil.
Velocis Spatii Meta novissima.
Quæris quo jaceas post Obitum Loco;
Quo non mala jacent. Et
Tempus nos avidum devorat & Chaos,
Mors individua est, noxia Corpori,
Nec parcens Animæ.

Persius and all the Poets made Use of this as an Encouragement to give Way to themselves, in whatever Lust prompted them to.

Indulge Genio, carpamus Dulcia; nostrum est
Quod vivis, Cinis, & Manes, & Fabula fies.

If it be said, That this is an Irony, and that he was not in earnest; it were easy to multiply Quotations to this Purpose from *Horace*, *Catullius*, and most of the Poets, which are not capable of any such Construction. But I forbear.

And albeit, *Cicero* was for the *Immortality of the Soul*; yet in his first Book of Tusculany Questions, he plainly derides the whole Business of *Rewards* and *Punishments* after this Life; as any one, who will attentively peruse it, may see. I forbear to transcribe the Passage; because I behoov'd to transcribe much to let see the Tendency of his Discourse: He plainly tells us, That he could be eloquent, if he had a Mind to speak against those Things; *Disertus esse possem, si contra Ista dicerem.* The Case is plainly this; That Person, whom he discourses, looks on *Death* as an *Evil*. *Cicero* tells him, That perhaps it is because he fears those Punishments after this Life, which the Vulgar believ'd, and after he has tartly rediculd them, *Tuscul. Quest. Lib.* 1. *a little from the Beginning. P. mihi* 312.

them, he concludes, That had he a Mind, he could enlarge against those Things, and plainly expose the whole Tradition.

But because some talk so much of *Plato*, *Socrates* *Cicero*, and we get so many Quotations from them about the *Immortality of the Soul* and a *future State*; I shall here represent their own Opinion somewhat more fully.

As for *Socrates*, he has not write any Thing that is come to our Hands: all the Accounts we have of him are from *Plato*, *Xenophon* and others, but especially *Plato* his Scholar, who was with him at his Death: From him then we shall learn at once, what both his Master's Opinion and his own were in this Matter.

When *Socrates* is making his Apology before his Judges, he tells them, "That to fear *Death*, is no-
Dacier's Plato *Vol.* 2. *P.* 28. Socrates's *Apology*. "thing else, but to believe ones self to be wise,
"when they are not; and to fancy that they know
"what they do not know. In Effect no Body knows
"*Death*; no Body can tell, but it may be the greatest Benefit of Man-
"kind; and yet Men are affraid on't, as if they knew certainly that
"it were the greatest of Evils. *And a little after*
Ibid. P. 40. *speaking of* Death, "What should I be affraid of
"the Punishment adjudg'd by *Melitus*, a Punish-
"ment that I cannot positively say whether it is Good or Evil?
And thus he concludes his Apology. "But now,
Ibid. P. 47. "it is true we should all retire to our respective Of-
"fices, you to live, and I to die. But whether you
"or I are going upon the better Expedition, 'tis known to none, but
"God alone.

Again, in that fam'd Discourse on this Subject, before his *Death*, after he has produc'd all the Arguments he can for
Plato's *Phedon* *P.* 135. 136. the *Immortality of the Soul*, he tells us pretty plainly, how Things stood with him. "Convincing the Au-
"dience of what I advance, is not only my Aim; in-
"deed I shall be infinitely glad that it come to pass; but my chief Scope
"is to perswade my self of the Truth of these Things; for I argue
"thus, My dear *Phedon*, and you'll find that this Way of Arguing is
"highly useful (very true to Folk that are not certain and can do no
"better, and only to these.) If my Propositions prove true, it is well
"done to believe them, and if after my Death they be found false, I
"will reap that Advantage in this Life, that I have been less afflicted by

the

" the Evils which commonly accompany it. But I ſhall not remain " long under this Ignorance. And when he is near his Cloſe, and juſt to take the Poiſon, or a little before having repreſented his Thoughts about *Rewards* and *Puniſhments* after this Life, which are little better than thoſe of the *Poets*; he concludes his Account in theſe Words, " No Man of Senſe can pretend to aſſure you, That all theſe Things are " juſt as you have heard. But all thinking Men will be poſitive, that " the State of the Soul, and the Place of its Abode, is abſolutely ſuch " as I repreſent it to be, or at leaſt, very near it, *provided the Soul be immortal.*

More might be alledg'd to the ſame Purpoſe; but this is ſufficient to let us ſee how wavering *Plato* and his Maſter *Socrates* were. They talk confidently ſometimes; but preſently they ſink again. Let us next ſee what *Cicero*'s Mind was. He treats this Subject, on ſet Purpoſe, in his firſt Book of *Tuſculany Queſtions*, which is wholly ſpent on this Subject. He undertakes to ſhew and prove againſt the Perſon whom he Inſtructs, That *Death is not Evil*, whether we are diſſolved quite or not: And having, as he fancies, proven that *Death is not an Evil*, he proceeds and gives us this Account of his Underatking. " I ſhall teach you, *Speaking of* *P.* 325. " Death, if I can, *ſi poſſim*, That it is not only *not Evil*, " but *Good*: But a little after he tells us clearly what we may expect from him, when his Hearer exhorts him to go on; ſays he, " Geram tibi Morem, & ea quæ vis, ut *P.* 326. " potero, explicabo: Nec tamen quaſi *Pythius Apol-* " *lo*, certa ut ſint, & fixa quæ dixero: Sed ut Homunculus unus e multis " Probabilia Conjecturâ ſequens, ultra enim quo progrediar, quam ut " Veriſimilia videam, non habeo: Certa dicent ii, qui & percipi ea " poſſe dicunt, & ſe Sapientes eſſe profitentur. And ſpeaking about this Opinion, his Auditor tells him, how pleaſant this is to him. It will be a little pleaſant to hear them *P.* 329. ſpeak. " *A.* Me vero delectat: Idque primum ita " eſſe (ſcil. *Animos eſſe immortales*:) Deinde etiamſi non ſit, mihi tamen " perſuaderi velim. *M.* Quid tibi ergo Operâ noſtrâ Opus eſt? Num " Eloquentiâ *Platonem* ſuperare poſſumus? Evolve diligenter ejus eum " Librum, qui eſt de Animo: Amplius quod deſideres nihil erit. *A.* " Feci meherculè, & quidem ſæpius: Sed neſcio quomodo, dum lego, " aſſentior: Cum poſui Librum, & mecum ipſe de *Immortalitate Ani-* " *morum* cœpi cogitare, Aſſentio omnis illa elabitur. After he has in-

ſtructed

structed his Hearer, he professes his Resolution to stand by this Opinion; but gets a Caution from his Instructer, that lets us see how Things stand. " *A.* Nemo me de *Immortalitate* depellet. *M. answers*, Laudo id " quidem, etsi nihil nimis oportet considere: Movemur enim sæpe aliquo " acutè concluso: Labamus mutamusque Sententiam clarioribus etiam " in Rebus: In his enim est aliqua Obscuritas. And if ye would know what his Reason was for insisting so long on the Proof of this, he tells us near the Close, That it was to banish the contrary Suspicion, which was troublesom. Much more might be adduc'd, but what has been said sufficiently demonstrates how fluctuating and uncertain the best of them were, in Reference to this important Point.

If any shall say, That tho' these great Men upon some Occasions, express'd themselves with some Hesitation, and did insinuate some Suspicion that the opposite Part of the Question might be true, yet upon other Occasions they are positive; and that this is as good an Evidence of their being firmly perswaded, as the other Expressions are of their Hesitation. I answer, the Consequence is naught. A seeming Positiveness upon some Occasions, may be the Result of the joint Influence of a strong Desire, that the Thing should be true, and some philosophical Querk urg'd for its Support: For as *Cicero* well observes in the Words last quoted, *Movemur sæpe aliquo acutè concluso*; and this especially holds true, where there is a strong Inclination to believe the Thing, as being of obvious Advantage to us. Now this may be, where there is no Certainty or firm Perswasion. I readily own that these great Men favour'd the *Immortality of the Soul*: But I positively deny, That they receiv'd it with that Firmness of Assent, that is not only due, but unavoidable to Truths, which carry their own Evidence along with them. And I moreover aver that the *Deists*, in quoting some of these Assertions from them, wherein they seem positive, suppressing other Expressions, wherein they discover a Hesitation, do but abuse the Reader's Credulity; and give neither a full nor fair Account of the Judgment of these Men.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Wherein some general Considerations are laid down for proving that many of the best Things, which are to be met with in the Heathens, were not the Discoveries of Nature's Light, *but came from* Tradition.

NOtwithstanding the gross Ignorance, which overspread the Heathen World, was very great; yet it cannot be deny'd that there are very many surprising Hints of Truth to be found, in many of their Writings, in Reference even to Matters of *Religion*.

The *Deists* take up whatever they meet with of this Sort, and confidently give it out, That all this they discover'd by the *meer Light of Nature*.

There are, who on the other Hand, will scarce allow them to have made any of those Discoveries by the *Light of Nature*; but ascribe whatever Hints of Truth are to be met with, to *Tradition*. This is said to be the Opinion of *Eusebius* and *Scaliger* by Dr. *Owen*. And it is of late maintain'd by Mr. *Nicolls* the ingenious Author of the *Conference with a Theist*: For which Mr. *Becconsal*, the Author of a late Treatise concerning the *Law of Nature*, is much displeas'd with him, and takes him to Task.

Theol. *Lib.* 1. *C.* 8. *Parag.* 4. *Confer. Part* 2. *Page* 32, 33, *&c.* Beccon. *of the Law of Nature C.* 4. *P.* 54, 55. *&c.*

I design not to make my self a Party in this Debate. I think that there is somewhat of Truth on both Sides: But if either think to carry the Mater to the Utmost, I think also there will be Mistakes on both Hands. It's to much to say that they discover'd nothing in Reference to *Religion* by the *meer Light of Nature*: And on the other Hand it savours of gross Ignorance to say that all we meet with in the Writings of the ancient *Sages*, was discover'd by the *Light of Nature*. Nothing is more evident, than that many Things have been handed from

Nation to Nation, and Age to Age by *Tradition*. This no modest Man will or can deny; it has been so clearly made out by many.

What I assert, and shall attempt to prove, is, " That many of the " most notable Things that we meet with in the *Heathen Writers*, in " Matters of *Religion*, are not to be look'd on as Discoveries made by " the *Light of Nature*; but as *Truths*, whereof they were inform'd by " *Tradition*. And moreover, that when we find them asserting *some* " *of those Truths*, which to us, who enjoy the *Scriptures*, and by the " *Scripture* have our *Reason improven*, appear to have a Foundation in " *Reason*, we are not therefore to conclude, That *Reason* led them to " those Truths; but rather, that in many Cases, they had even these " from *Tradition*.

In proving this Point, I shall not proceed by single Instances, but shall lay down these general Considerations, which at once clear the Truth of our Assertion, and discover whence these Traditions might come, and how easily they might be convey'd to them. Particular Instances may be had in great Abundance from those, who have, of set Purpose, largely insisted on this Subject. Amongst others, *Huetius* in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, has largely discours'd of particular Instances of this Nature. I think the following Observations taken together and duly considered, will put our Assertion beyond Question with the Sober and Judicious.

I. It's most certain, That the *Jews*, however in other Regards inconsiderable, which makes it still the more observable, had more full, clear and certain Knowledge of the *true God*, *Religion* and *Matters of Worship*, than all the World besides. If the *Deists* please to controvert this Proposition, we shall debate it with them when they please. And I dare be bold to say, That I shall prove that there is more *true* and *rational Divinity* in *One* of the Books of *Moses*, than they shall be able to find in *all the Heathen Writers*, when they have put all, that has been said by all of them, together.

II. Their Neighbours, and more especially the *Egyptians*, had many fair Occasions of obtaining Acquaintance with their Opinions and Practices in *Matters of Religion*. Several Persons at distant Times, went out from the *Church*, and settl'd in distant Nations. *Ishmael* went out from *Abraham's* Family, and *Esau* from that of *Isaac*. Now it cannot be suppos'd, how wicked soever these Persons were, but they would carry out with them some *true Notions*, *Opinions* and *Practices* in *Matters of Religion*. Nor can it reasonably be deny'd, That they founded their *new Governments*, on some of these *Notices*, tho' variously

blended

blended and mixt with corrupt Additions and Alterations, both in Matters of *Opinion* and *Practice*. And it is evident, That theſe Hints, or Remainders of Truth, in Matters of *Opinion* and *Practice*, as they were mixt with theſe Corruptions, would obtain a general and great Reſpect, as being found uſeful for maintaining *Order* in Societies, as being delivered to them, by the firſt Founders of their Nations, as being commended by their *Practice* and perhaps eſtabliſh'd by *Laws* and *Conſtitutions*. Whence it is not poſſibly to be ſuppos'd that theſe *Notices* or *Practices* could in an Age, or a few Ages wear out.

Again, it is particularly obſervable in this Caſe, That the *Church* was, for a long Tract of Time, in a wandring and unſettl'd State; which oblidg'd them to more of Intimacy with the Nations that lay near them, than afterwards was neceſſary, when they were ſettl'd in a Land, by themſelves apart, and were, by *divine Conſtitutions*, barr'd from that Familiarity.

Moreover, as to the *Egyptians*, they had much Occaſion of being particularly acquainted with the *Jews Opinions* and *Practices*, in the *Matters of God*: The *Iſraelites* dwelt among them (beſides what occaſional Converſe they had before) about 217 Years together. The Correſpondence was again renew'd in *Solomon*'s Time by his matching with the King of *Egypt's* Daughter. *Jeremiah*, and a great Company with him, ſtay'd a conſiderable Time in *Egypt*, and propheſied there to the *Jews*, who had at that Time no ſeparate Dwellings, and propheſied concerning *Egypt*; which, together with the Reputation he had got at *Jeruſalem*, by his Predictions that were remarkably verify'd, the Notice taken of him by the King of *Babylon*, and the Conteſts he had with thoſe of his own Nation, could not but make him much regarded.

It is further conſiderable, That there were many Things, which may reaſonably be ſuppos'd to excite an uncommon Curioſity in the *Egyptians*, to underſtand the *Religion* of the *Jews*. It is known what a Place *Joſeph* long had in *Egypt*, and how he manag'd it. Afterwards the People, while under Bondage, were ſcattered through the Land, and the Piety of ſome of them appearing in their Sufferings, could not but be taken notice of, as their Scattering through the Land gave Occaſion to the *Egyptians* to enquire, as to the Principles that influenc'd it. The miraculous Appearances of God on behalf of that People in *Egypt* and their Neighbourhood, in the Wilderneſs, would have excited the Curioſity of a People, much leſs inquiſitive, than they were. The Reputation of *Solomon*, his Alliance with the Crown of *Egypt*, and his Traffick with them, as they gave a new Occaſion, ſo could not

but spur them on, to enquire further into Matters of this Sort. If, to all this, you add the general Character, Writers of all Sorts give of the *Egyptians*, That they were a People more than ordinarly fond about Matters of *Religion*, in so much that our Author *Herbert* observes, They are said to be the first that taught *Religion*; and if further it is considered, That the *Gentiles*, finding the Unsatisfactoriness of their own Opinions and Practices in *Matters of Religion*, were very much inclin'd to Change, and adopt the Customs, Practices and Way of every Nation in *Matters of Religion*, to try if they could find any Thing more Satisfying than their own. If, I say, all these are laid together, it cannot be doubted that the *neighbouring Nations*, and particularly the *Egyptians*, learn'd many Things from the *Jews* in *Matters of Religion*.

De Rel. Gent. P. 8.

III. It is observable, That all these Things fell out a considerable Time before any of those great Men appear'd or flourish'd in the World, whose Writings are come to us, and contain those Truths, concerning the Rise whereof we now Discourse. *Chilon*

The seven *Sages*, *Thales*, *Solon*, *Pittacus*, *Bias*, *Chilas*, *Periander* and *Cleobolus*, who raised the Reputation of *Greece*, did not flourish till about the Time of the *Babylonish Captivity*, and long after the Dispersion of the ten *Tribes*, some do reckon it 125 Years. *Socrates* and *Plato* flourished not for near 150 Years after these again. Now these are among the first, who made any considerable Figure for Learning of this Sort, in the *Heathen World*, whose Writings are come to us.

Le Clerk *Comput. Hist. P.* 35-40.

IV. All these great Men did, for their own Improvement, travel into *forreign Nations*, and made it their Business to learn their *Opinions* and *Practices*: Particularly we are told of the most considerable of them by *Diogenes Laertius*, and others, That they were very concern'd to know the Opinions of the *Egyptian Priests* in *Matters of Religion*, and most of what they knew in these Matters, was taught them by those. This will be deny'd by none, that is acquaint with the Lives of those Persons.

V. It is further observable, That, in many Instances, there is such a plain Resemblance in their Opinions to the Scripture Accounts of the *Origin* of the *World*, the *Deludge*, the *Peopling of the Earth*, and most other Things, as could not be casual; but shews plainly that they were deriv'd thence. This in particular Instances, by many, particularly *Huetius*.

tius and others, to whom he refers, is ſo fully demonſtrated, that it cannot, without manifeſt Impudence, be deny'd.

VI. Which comes yet ſomewhat nearer to our Purpoſe, it is very obſervable even as to thoſe Truths, which have ſome Foundation in *Reaſon*, ſuch as theſe, about the *Immortality* of the Souls of Men, and their *State* after *Death*, and the like, that theſe great Men of old propos'd them commonly, without offering any Proof of them, or any Reaſons for them. Now it is not credible that, if they had been led to thoſe *Notices* by *Reaſon*, they would have offer'd thoſe important *Truths*, without offering Reaſons of them. This Obſervation we find made, as to its Suſtance, tho' not on ſuch Views, by no leſs a Perſon than *Cicero*, who knew *as well* how Matters then ſtood, to ſpeak modeſtly, as any now can do. Speaking of the *Immortality of the Soul*, and the ancient *Philoſophers* Sentiments about it, he ſays, " Sed redeo ad Antiquos. Ra-" tionem illi Sententiæ ſuæ non ferè reddebant, niſi quid erat Numeris " aut Deſcriptionibus explicandum---- *Platonem* ferunt primum de Ani-" morum Æternitate non ſolum ſenſiſſe idem, quod *Pythagoras*, ſed Ra-" tionem etiam attuliſſe.

VII. Nor is it leſs conſiderable to prove, That the Notions, which prevail'd about the *Immortality of the Soul*, and a *future State*, and the like may be ſaid of many others, were not learn'd from *Reaſon*, but from *Tradition*; and that the Impreſſion and Perſwaſion of *theſe Truths* were more generally intertain'd, and more ſtrongly riveted among the *Vulgar* than among the *Philoſophers*. Whole *Shoals* of them or *Catervæ*, as *Cicero* above-quoted ſpeaks, deny'd and derided all theſe Things, which the Vulgar firmly believed. This Obſervation I find made by the learn'd Dr. *Owen*," Cum Mundi Conditu Judicium poſt hanc Vitam exercendum, " Famam catholicam obtinuit. Eam etiam Perſuaſionem comitata eſt Immortalitatis Animarum *Præſumptio*, quæ *quamvis Rationi etiam innitatur, tamen cum maxime ſemper apud Vulgus, potius quam* [illegible] *obtinuit, non niſi Traditioni adſcribenda eſt.*

VIII. When theſe great Men of old do give Reaſons of their Opinions, they are ſuch, as any one may ſee, never led them to *Opinions*: But having, by *Tradition* receiv'd them, they were aſham'd to hold 'em, without being capable to give any Reaſon for what they held, and therefore, they ſet their Wits on the Rack to find out what to ſay for them. And it was but ſeldom they hit on the true ones. For moſt part their Reaſonings are plainly childiſh, trifling and ſophiſtical: It

were

were easy to demonstrate this. As to the Arguments of *Socrates* and *Plato* for the *Immortality of the Soul*, they are plain *Sophisms*: And upon what Design they were urg'd, we have heard before to confirm themselves in an Opinion, the Belief whereof was accompanied with some Advantage. A learn'd Person says justly, "That *Plato* endeavours "to prove the *Immortality of the Soul* by such Reasons, "as, if they conclude any Thing, would conclude it "to be a *God*. And the same may be said of *Cicero* and others.

Dr. How *living Temple, Pt.* 1. *P.* 122.

IX. It is moreover remarkable, to this Purpose, that not only are there many Things to be met with in the Writings and Practices of the ancient Writers amongst the *Heathens*, whereof no colourable Reason can be given, nor any Account made otherwise, than by ascribing them to ancient and corrupted *Traditions*; but it's further Remarkable, that they knew not how to manage or improve those Hints, which were this Way handed to them. Most of them quite spoil these Things in the telling. A few of the more wise, conscious of their own Ignorance, yet wanting Humility and Ingenuity enough to acknowledge it, wrap themselves in Clouds, and express themselves darkly, to conceal their own Ignorance from the Vulgar, and one that understands, would not know whether to laugh or be angry, to see their fond Admirers, in later Ages, sweating to fetch sublime Meanings from Words which the Writers themselves really understood not.

X. In the last Place, we find the Ancients themselves, on some Occasions, owning, that they owed the first Discoveries of these Things to *Tradition*. *Dacier* in the Life of *Plato*, tells us, "That he first instructs them "in *Religion*, about which he establishes nothing, without having con- "sulted God; that is, nothing but what is conformable to *true Tradi- "tion* and *ancient Oracles*. To evince the Truth of this, *Plato*'s own Words are subjoin'd, *God, sayeth* Plato, *as we are taught by* ancient Tradition, *having in himself the Beginning, the Middle and End of all Things, always goes on in his Way, according to his Nature, without ever stepping aside, he is followed by* Justice, *which never fails to punish the Transgressions committed against his Law.* And a little after speaking about the Punishments of the Wicked, he proceeds thus, "They are not limited to the Miseries of this Life, nor to Death "it self, from which even good Men are not exempt; for these are "Pen-

Life of Plato, *P.* 86.

Plato *de Legibus, Lib.* 4.

" Penalties too light and ſhort, but they are horrible Torments. But yet more remarkable to this Purpoſe are his Words in his Epiſtles, *Antiquis vero ſacrisq; Sermonibus Fides ſemper habenda, qui declarant Animum nobis eſſe immortalem, et Judices habere, quorum Decretis, pro Merito Præmia et Supplicia maxima attribuantur, ut primum quis e Corpore deceſſerit.* Plato *Epiſt.* 7.

Lay theſe Things together, & as they are in themſelves evident enough; ſo I think they amount to a full Demonſtration of the Aſſertion, we have above laid down, for the Proof whereof we adduc'd them; and they do abundantly ſhew, how inconſiderately every Thing met with in ancient Writers, is put upon the Score of *Nature's Light*.

CHAP. XVII.

Wherein we conſider what Herbert's *Opinion was as to the* Sufficiency *of his* Articles, *and offer ſome Reflections, ſhewing how fooliſh, abſurd and ridiculous the* Deiſts *Pretences to their* Sufficiency *are.*

WE have now demonſtrate that theſe *five Articles* did not *univerſally obtain* in the World, and that conſequently the *Heathen World* had not the *Means neceſſary to Salvation.*

But ſhould we grant what has been above evicted falſe, That *theſe Articles* did univerſally obtain, yet all is not done, nor is the Difficulty ſo got over; for we are not agreed, that theſe, tho' acknowledg'd, are *alone ſufficient.*

We know our Author would bear us in Hand, that they are *ſufficient.* He tells us to this Purpoſe, that when he had found them out, he ſaw that there was nothing wanting to make a *compleat Religion.* " Quum haſce igitur eximias Veritates ſeorſim paraſſem, diſquiſivi " porro, quid hiſce adjecerint, vel quidem adjicere poſſint Sacerdotes, " unde certior Fidei circa Salutem Æternam daretur Norma, aut Vitæ " Integritas Sanctitaſq; magis promoveretur, aut communis ubique " ſtabili-

" ſtabiliretur Concordia. Videbam ſatis alia atque alia hic addi poſſe
" quin et addita fuiſſe ; ſed quæ Veritates haſce obſtruerent, enerva-
" rentque potius, quam Vim Roburque illis conciliarent. And indeed our Author is ſo bold to challenge all the World to ſhew what can be added to theſe *five Articles*. " Ut viderent interea Antiſtites, Præſuleſq;
" per totum Orbem diffuſi, quid hiſce quinq; Articulis, addere potue-
" rint : Unde vera illa Virtus, quæ Homines Deo ſimiles, Conſortioque
" ejus dignos efficit ; vel Pietas, Puritas Sanctitaſq; Vitæ magis pro-
" moveri poſſint. And growing bold, by this imaginary Succeſs, he proceeds to inveigh, tho' more covertly againſt the *Satisfaction of Chriſt* as deſtructive to *Piety*. Of which he gives a moſt diſingenuous Account, as commonly he does of *all the Articles* of *Reveal'd Religion*, which he has Occaſion to mention.

But however confident our Author is, of the *Sufficiency* of his *five Articles* in this place; yet elſewhere he ſhews he had not over much Certainty in his own Mind, about this Matter: For ſome Pages after, he ſays, *Et quidem quinque hoſce Articulos bonos, catholicoſque eſſe unusquisq; Dubio procul fatebitur ; ad Salutem tamen Æternam comparandam non ſufficere prohibebunt nonnulli, cæterum, qui ita locutus fuerit, ne ille quidem audax ; nedum ſævum temerariumq; Effatum (mea Sententia) protulerit ; quum nulli ſatis explorata ſint Judicia Divina ; quam etiam ob Cauſam,* neque ea ſufficere protenus dixerim : *attamen magis probabilis mihi videtur eorum Opinio, qui æque piè ac leniter de Dei Judiciis ſtatuunt, dum Homo, quod in ſe eſt, præſtat; neque enim in cujuſve Poteſtate eſt, ut* Fides *ſive* Traditiones *quantumvis laxæ (præſertim ubi aliqua ex Parte controverſuntur) ad ſe ſatis pertingant, neque tandem recta communiq; Ratione quinq; Articulis noſtris addi poteſt Dogma, unde magis pii, ſincerique evadunt Homines ; aut Pax, Concordiaq; publica magis promoveatur.* Here our Author is more modeſt.

Thus we have ſeen what his Opinion is; it now remains that we offer ſome Reflections on it. Many offer themſelves: I ſhall only touch at a few.

I. Tho' the *Deiſts* are as deſirous as any, to confine *Religion* to a narrow Compaſs, and perhaps it's as much their Intereſt, as it is of any Sort of Men, that it ſhould conſiſt of *few Articles* ; yet, for Shame, they cannot make it contain leſs, than thoſe *five Articles*. They own and muſt own all thoſe Neceſſary to Salvation, both in Belief and Practice. It's not poſſible, they themſelves being Judges, to reach the *Ends* of *Religion*, if any of them are cut off. Since then we have above prov'd that theſe did not *univerſally obtain*, it's plain, that all Mankind had

had not *ſufficient Knowledge* of *Religion*. Thus it is in Fact.

But now where ſhall the Blame of this be laid? On themſelves? On the Prieſts? Or on God? This laſt cannot be ſaid.

Well then, muſt theſe Villains for Prieſts, with whom our Author and all the ſucceeding *Deiſts* are ſo angry, bear the Blame of it, in that they did not better teach and inſtruct the People, in the Grounds of *ſincere Religion*? But tho' our Author, and all the *Deiſts* would fain lodge the Blame here; yet I am ſcarce ſatisfied of the Juſtice of the Charge; tho' I am willing to own, that they were for moſt Part Arch-villains: For how ſhall it be made appear that they themſelves knew theſe Grounds of *ſincere Religion*? I know our Author Blames them for not imparting the Knowledge of *ſincere Religion* to the People, & that he may be ſure to ſhut the Door upon them, that they may not eſcape, he adds by Way of Parentheſis, *licet illis ſatis cognitam.* *P.* 180 *ſub Finem.* But how proves he this, That they know, that *chaſt* and *ſincere Religion* well enough? might not they be ſuppos'd ignorant of it, as well as moſt of the *Philoſophers*, the *greateſt Moraliſts* not excepted? Again, I don't well ſee what Right they had to teach, or how they were oblig'd. Did the *Law of Nature* authorize 'em to be publick Teachers? I believe the *Deiſts* think not. Was not every Man able to ſhift for himſelf, and find the Way to Bleſſedneſs? If he was, what need was there to truſt theſe *villainous Prieſts*? who was oblidged to liſten to 'em? If every Man was not able, without the Help of ſome Inſtructer, then if that Inſtructer fail'd in his Duty, as it is certain they did almoſt perpetually, nay our Author will not allow, nor ſee I any need of that *almoſt*, what becomes of the *poor Vulgar*, who, without Inſtruction cannot reach competent Knowledge? He is not able to reach it, his Inſtructers fail of their Duty: And for any Thing I ſee, the poor Man wants, and muſt always want a *ſufficient Religion*, and that without any Fault of his.

Well then, avoidably either every Man is able to do and know for himſelf, in Matters of Religion; or a great many, even moſt of the *poor Vulgar*, are loſt for good and all; and there is no Help for it, and that without their Fault: If the laſt be ſaid, our Author has loſt his Point quite, and if this be a Fault, he will lay it at *Providence* its Door, that has not ſufficiently provided all Men, in the Means neceſſary for their *future Happineſs*: If the firſt be ſaid, then the Blame muſt ly at every Man's own Door. But methinks our Author is not willing of this; for he would always excuſe the *Vulgar*, and ſuppoſe 'em ſo rude and ignorant, that they had neither Will, Courage, nor Abi-

lity to step otherwise, than they were led. But after all, the Fault must be lodg'd at their Doors, or the *Deists* whole Cause is lost. I confess any one that was under such Impressions of their stupid Ignorance, as our Anthor seems to have been, will even think it hard enough to say that every one of them had *this Ability*, to find out a *sufficient Religion*; and I believe, not without Ground; tho' I still think, that they might have known, and done more than they did; but this will do the *Deists* Cause no Service.

2. But further, the *Deists* must own that *Natural Religion*, according to this Mould of it, at least, did never obtain in *Purity*, without *any Additions*, in any Place of the World. Our Author confesses, That on this Foundation, there was every where a strange Superstructure raised. After he has spoken of *those Articles*, he subjoins,

P. 212. *Hæc igitur sinceriores* Gentilium *Religionis Partes fuerè; reliquæ vel commentitiæ Fabellæ, vel Archetypæ Nugæ, vel Scitamenta quædem prohiberi possunt: inter quæ (Damno Mortalium) nonnulla Insana, nonnulla etiam Impia visebantur.* Now, this being the Case, I would gladly know, if our Author's *five Articles* are look'd upon as of such Virtue, that they could hallow all these *Additions* made to them, or at least, so far antidote the Poison of them, that Persons, who embrac'd this *Complex Frame of Religion*, consisting of these *five Articles*, and *such Additions* as in every Nation, were made to them, might yet reach *Happiness*, or not.

It is pretended that these *five Articles* of *natural Religion*, tho' *contaminate* with these *Additions* (as our Author speaks when he enters upon his *Discourse* about those *Orthodox Points of Religion, Ritibus, Cæremoniaq; contaminabantur, conspurcabanturq;*) are *sufficient* to lead to *Happiness*, then this is plainly to say, That the *Religion* of every Country was *good* and *sufficient*, and that every one might be *sav'd* by *that Religion* he was bred in. If the Defence of this is undertaken, it will be found a pretty hard Province, and one will not easily be able to defend, That the *complex Religion* of every Country was *sufficient*, or that the *Virtue* of *those Articles* was such, as to preserve from the Hurt of the *Additions*. What if, in the *complex Frame* of *most Religions* of the World, some of our Author's *fundamental Articles* are justl'd out of their own Place? Perhaps, while *each Religion* sets up for so many *inferiour Gods*, they rob the *One supreme GOD* of much of *his Glory*, to adorn these *imaginary Gods* with. It may be, more Stress is laid on *Rites* than on *Vertue*, which our Au-

P. 184 *Cap* 4. *at the Close.*

Herbert *de Veritate P.* 272.

Author makes the *principal Part* of *Worſhip*. Perhaps more Streſs is laid on their *Rites for Expiation*, than on *Repentance*. What if the Additions made are ſuch, as are utterly inconſiſtent with a due Regard to *theſe Articles*, or a juſt Improvement of 'em? What if there are other Things yock'd in with them in moſt Religions, that are as derogatory to the Honour of God, as theſe can be ſuppos'd conductive for its Advancement? How can ſuch a horrid Medley of Things, *ſound* and *unſound*, *orthodox Foundations* and *impious Superſtructures*, be acceptable to God, or uſeful to Man? One half, to wit, our Author's *five catholick Articles*, is deſign'd to lead men to *Bliſs*, pretend, the *Deiſts*: And the other, to wit, the *Rites* and *Ceremonies*, are deſign'd to the worſt of Purpoſes, by thoſe Villains of Prieſts, who aim at cheating the World. Now, how ſhall ſuch croſs Deſigns agree or conſiſt? Or, how can Means adapted to ſo very different, nay, quite oppoſite Ends, be unite and hang together? Or, if they are unite, how can *that Religion*, which conſiſts of ſuch jarring and incoherent Materials, turn to any Account? But this Opinion is ſo ridiculous, that I need not inſiſt in diſproving of it. No Man of Sobriety can ever pretend that *theſe Articles* can be of any Uſe, if each of them is not kept in its own Place, and if Care is not taken to guard againſt all Additions, which are inconſiſtent with a due Reſpect to *thoſe Articles*. Some little Additions, perhaps one might ſuppoſe would do no great Hurt: But if there are any, that entrench on the Foundations, and put 'em out of their Place, the whole Fabrick falls, and all is ruin'd. Now I think it were no hard Work to prove, That the *Additions* were ſuch, in every Nation, as rendred the whole utterly uſeleſs, and inſufficient to any of the moſt conſiderable Ends of Religion, either with Reſpect to God or Man.

But if it is pretended, That while thoſe *five Articles* are aſſerted *ſufficient*, it is only meant, that if Perſons would abandon all thoſe extravagant, deſtructive and filthy Additions, which every where are made to them, and only regard them, then in following theſe, they might attain to *Life* and *Eternal Happineſs*: If, I ſay, this is alledg'd, then I would ask, How ſhall we diſtinguiſh betwixt *thoſe Articles* and *others* that are interwoven with them, in each Country? By what Marks ſhall the *Neceſſarys* be known from the *not Neceſſarys*? The *Fundamentals* from the Acceſſaries? Is every Man able, with our Author, to *diſſect* and *inſpect* the *ſeveral Religions* of the Countries, where they live, and ſeparate the *Neceſſarys* from theſe that are *not ſo*? Our Author found this a pretty hard Task: What ſhall poor mean People then

think of it? Our Author has shown what fair Pleas might be made for many of the most pernicious Parts of the *Religions* of the Nations. Would a poor Country Man be able to rid his Feet of such Fetters? It is utterly impossible that the one Half of Mankind could distinguish betwixt what was to be rejected, and what was to be retain'd. In a Word, it is evident, that all the World over, Things pernicious & destructive were so twisted in with Things of another Sort, and such fair Pleas made for them, that it was utterly impossible for the poor ignorant Vulgar to divide the one from the other. Since then these *five Articles* signify nothing unless they were sever'd from these other Things, which were every where interwoven with them, and most Part of Mankind were utterly unable to do this, which I doubt no Man ever did before our Author, it seems evident, that of whatever Use they may be to our Author, who was so sharp-sighted, as to spy them out and distinguish them from the other Things with which they were mixt; yet they can be of no Use to the far greater Part of Mankind, and consequently the far greater Part of humane Race still must be own'd destitute of the Means that may be justly term'd *sufficient* to lead 'em to *future Happiness*. These *five Articles*, as in Fact they have always been interwoven with other Things, were not *sufficient* to save any; and whatever their Force might be, if they had been sever'd from other Things, yet they not being so, before our Author did it, and most Part of Men being utterly uncapable of making this Distinction, they must be looked on as *insufficient* to many, at least of Mankind, who therefore certainly were destitute of Means needful for *future Happiness*, and so left to perish. I know our Author pretends that some were able to distinguish, and did make a Difference betwixt *these Articles* and the *Additions*: "Verum quinq; Articulos supra dictos
P. 211. "(uti quæ in Corde describuntur) sine ulla
"Hæsitatione accipiebant olim *Gentiles* Dubio procul;
"de reliquis puto, ambigebant, tum ii præsertim, qui inter illos saltem "sapientiores existimabantur. How ill grounded our Author's Confidence as to the universal Acceptance of his *five Articles* is, we have seen above. What he subjoins about the *Gentiles* distinguishing the *Additions* that were made to them from them, comes not up to the Point: For the Question is not, Whether some could thus distinguish the one from the other; but, Whether all did or could? And when he pretends that some of the more discerning did so, what Proof advances he? Nothing but his bold *Puto*. This Reflection might be further urg'd, but I shall pass it, and proceed to another.

3. How

3. How ſhall one be ſatisfied that theſe *five Articles* are all that were *neceſſary*; or that they are *ſufficient*? Are the *Deiſts* all agreed about this? No, we have heard one above making *Seven neceſſary*. Nay our Author is not too confident, as we have heard above, when he ſays, " Quum nulli ſatis explorata ſint Judicia divina; *quam etiam* " *ob Cauſam, neque eos ſufficere protenus dixerim.* We ſee our Author is not very ſure about the *Sufficiency* of *thoſe Articles*. But he ſeems pretty poſitive that there is no other *Article* diſcoverable by the *common Reaſon* of Mankind, that can be of any great Uſe, or that is *neceſſary* to anſwer the *great Ends of Religion*, the *publick Peace* and *Bettering* of Mankind. But we ſee the *Deiſts* are not all agreed here: Some think more needful. But I have two or three Words to ſay to all this; May no *Article* be allow'd *neceſſary* that is controverted? So our Author Inſinuates: And *Blount* in his *Religio Laici* is poſitive oftner than once. Then I would know of the *Deiſts*, Have never *theſe Articles* any or all of them been controverted? Have not we already proven, That the *firſt Article* has been controverted, anent the *Being* of *One Supreme God*? Is not our Author's *third Article*, *viz. That Vertue* (as it is diſcoverable by the *Light of Nature*) *is the principal Part of the Worſhip of God*, diſputed by *Chriſtians*? Do not the Followers of *Spinoza* deny *Repentance to be a Duty*, and that in Compliance with their Maſter, who pretends to demonſtrate in his *Ethicks*, *That he who repents is twice miſerable*? Has not the *Fifth* been controverted by many of old? Let any who denys this, read *Cicero Lib.* 1. *Tuſc. Queſt.* or *Plato's Phedon*, and they will learn, That it has been controverted by mo of the wiſe Men than imbrac'd it. And don't very many of our *modern Deiſts* call it in Queſtion? Again, have there not been ſome other *Articles* as univerſally agreed, as little controverted, and perhaps leſs than ſome of theſe? To give but one Inſtance, Has not the *Article* about the *Worſhip of God*, that *He* was to be *worſhiped* with ſome *ſolemn external Worſhip*, whom we own'd as *God*, been as much agreed to, as any of the reſt? Doth it not ariſe from the common Reaſon of Mankind? But I ſhall wave this.

Compare P. 3 & 4.

Spin. *Ethicks P.* 4. *Prop.* 54. *Pœnetentia Virtus non eſt, ſive ex Ratione non oritur, quem: Facti pœnitet, bis miſer ſeu impotens eſt.*

4. There is another Thing, that I would know of the *Deiſts*, anent their *five Articles*. Do they think them, as they are propos'd, *ſufficient*? or muſt they not be well explain'd? If, as they are propos'd, I would gladly

gladly see the Man that can have the Face to maintain, what is not only untrue, but ridiculous. Will, for Instance, the owning *Vertue*, to be the *principal Part* of the *Worship of God*, signifie any Thing to the World, while they know not, and are not agreed what is *Vertue* and what is *Vice*? Is not this to mock the World, to propose general Articles, and tell the World is agreed about them, while yet one Half is not agreed what is the Signification of these general Words? Is not this plain Cheat? 'Tis true, *Blount*, who has copied all from our Author, as the present *Deists* do from him, tells us that *these Articles* must be well explain'd. "Neither can I, *says he*, imagine so much as one Article more in *common Reason*, "that could make Man better, or more pious, when the foresaid were "rightly explicated and observ'd. But now, are not these *Articles sufficient*, unless rightly explicated? No, he dares not say it. Well, was the World agreed about this right Explication of them? Who ever did rightly explain them? Point us to the one Person who did it, either for himself or others? Was every Body able to do it for himself? If not, then I fear the World wanted still a *sufficient Religion*, after all Pains taken to provide 'em in one. And further, What is the Meaning of our Author's wording the *third Article*, *That Vertue is the principal Part of the Worship of God*? This may be true, tho' it be not the *only Part*. Well, tho' it is the *principal Part*, may there not be *another Part necessary*? Tho' perhaps the Head of a Man is the principal Part, yet there are some other Parts necessary. Was not the World as much agreed that there should be *another Part*, as that this was a *Part* of the *Worship of God*? I believe it is easy to prove the World was more agreed as to the *first* than the *last*. Why then must this be overlook'd? I believe I could guess pretty near; He was affrai'd to do it, because he saw that he would presently be confounded with the Differences about the *Way of Worship*, and that he would never be able to maintain, That *Reason* was *sufficient* to direct as to the *solemn Worship of God*: And that, if he should assert it, he would have not only *Christians* to dispute the Point with him, but *Heathens*. But lest it should be thought what is alledg'd of the *Heathens* looking on *Reason* as incompetent for this, is groundless, I shall only copy you a little of *Socrates* and *Alcibiades*'s Discourse about Worship out of *Plato*, or rather remind the Reader of what we quoted from him. *Socrates* meets *Alcibiades* going to the Temple to pray, and dissuades him from it, because he knew not how to do it, till one should

Religio Laici. P.73.

come

come and teach him. *Soc. ſays*, " It's altogether ne- M. Dacier's Plato
" ceſſary you ſhould wait for ſome Perſon to teach *Engliſhed*, *Vol.* 1.
" you how you ought to behave your ſelf, both to- *P.* 249, 250.
" wards the Gods and Men. *Alcib. replys*, And *Second* Alcibiad:
" when will that Time come, *Socrates?* And who is *Or of Prayer.*
" he that will inſtruct me? With what pleaſure
" ſhould I look on him? Whereupon *Socrates* bids him hope that God
" will do it, and will take the Miſt off his Soul, and cure him of that
" Darkneſs, that hinders him from Diſtinguiſhing betwixt Good and
" Evil. Whereupon *Alcib.* ſays, I think I muſt defer my Sacrifices to that
" Time. *To which* Soc. *returns*, You have Reaſon: It is more ſafe to
" do ſo, than run ſo great a Risk. And the ſame *Plato* elſewhere tells
us, " That this Inſtructer muſt be a Perſon ſomewhat
" more than humane. Nor was *Jamblicus*, a famous *Lib.* 4. *de Lege Civ.*
Platonick Philoſopher, who liv'd in the *fourth Century*, *by Dr.* Leſlie *a-*
otherwiſe minded, whoſe Words, as I find 'em *gainſt the* Jews. *P.*
tranſlated by Mr. *Ferguſon*, run thus, " It is not 386. Ferg. *Enquir.*
" eaſy to know what God will be pleaſed with, un- *into mor. Vertue*,
" leſs we be either immediately inſtructed by God &c. *P.* 177.
" our ſelves, or taught by ſome Perſon whom God Jambli. *de Vita*
" hath convers'd with, or arrive at the Knowledge Pythag. *Cap.* 28.
" of it by ſome divine Means or other.

5. There is another Thing that I would gladly be inform'd anent, and that is, Whether every Sort of Knowledge of them be *ſufficient?* Or, is a clear, certain and firm Perſwaſion needful? If the *firſt*, How can a dark, uncertain and wavering Knowledge have that Influence upon Practice, and that Vigour to excite to a Compliance with them, which is abſolutely needful in Order to attain the Benefit of them? If the *latter*, How will our Author prove, That it was any where to be met with, as to them all, in the *Heathen World*? Or, how will he make it appear, That it is attainable by *meer Reaſon?* Methinks our Author's Words above-noted, as to the *fifth Article*, ſeem not to import any great Certainty. This might be urg'd to that Degree, that it would be very hard, nay, I fear not to ſay, impoſſible for the *Deiſts* to rid their Feet of it.

6. I would further know, Will theſe *five Articles* be *ſufficient* to this *End* to lead to *eternal Happineſs*, whether Men direct to it or not? Is not the Intention of ſome Conſideration in *moral Actions*? And what if I ſhould deny that the *Religion* of *Heathens* was directed to *this End*, the

Ob-

Obtaining of *future Happiness?* If I should, I know some very great Men are of my Mind. I shall name two, the one a *Christian*, the other a *Heathen*. The *first* is the famous *Samuel Puffendorf* Counsellor of State to the late King of *Swedden*. His Words are worthy to be here transcrib'd, tho' somewhat long. " Now to look back " to the first Beginnings of Things, we find, That before the Nativity " of our Saviour, the Inhabitants of the whole Universe, except the " *Jews*, liv'd in gross Ignorance as to spiritual Affairs. For what was " commonly taught concerning the Gods, was for the most Part in- " vol'd in Fables, and most extravagant Absurdities. 'Tis true, some " of the learn'd among them have pretended to give some rational Ac- " count concerning the Nature of the Gods and the Soul; but all this " in so imperfect and dubious a Manner, that they themselves remain'd " very uncertain in the whole Matter. They agreed almost all of them " in this Point, That Mankind ought to apply it self to the Practice of " *Vertue*; but they did not propose any other Fruits, but the Honour " and Benefits, which thence did accrue to civil Society. For what " the Poets did give out concerning the *Rewards* of *Vertue* and *Punish-* " *ments* of *Vice* after Death, was by these, who pretended to be the " Wisest among them, look'd upon as Fables, invented to terrify and " keep in Aw the common People. The rest of the People liv'd at ran- " dom, and what the *Heathens* call'd *Religion*, did not contain any " Doctrine or certain Articles concerning the Knowledge of *Divine Mat-* " *ters*. But the greatest Part of their *Religious Worship* consisted in *Sa-* " *crifices* and *Ceremonies*, which tended more to Sports and Voluptuous- " ness, than to the Contemplation of divine Things. Wherefore the " *Heathen Religion* did neither edify in this Life, nor afford any Hopes " or Comfort at the Time of Death. Thus far he. Now methinks here is a quite different Account of the Heathen World from that which our Author gives us, and that given by no Church Man, but a States Man; and one as learn'd as our Author too, and that both in *History* and the *Law of Nature*, as his Works evince, and in my Opinion 'tis the juster of the two Accounts. The *Second* is *Varro* quoted by our Author, who divides the *Religion* of the *Heathens* into *three Sorts*, *Primum Genus appellat* Mythicon, *Secundum*, Civile, *Tertium*, Physicum. The *First* is that of the *Poets*, which is altogether fabulous. The other which he calls *Natural*, is that of the *Philosophers*, which is wholly employ'd about the

Introduct. Hist. of Europe, P. 357. Ch. 12. Par. 2.

P. 227.

See it also in August. de Civit. Dei, Lib. 6. Cap. 5.

the *Nature* of the *Gods*. And *Varro* expreſly ſays, It was not meet for, nor of any Uſe to the *Vulgar*. The *third Sort* was what he calls *Civil*, which was wholly calculate for *humane Society*, and its Support; and to this all the *publick Worſhip* belong'd, if we may believe *Varro* in the Paſſage we now ſpeak of. When he has open'd the Nature of each of them, he concludes with an Account of the Deſign of them. " Prima Theologia maxime accommodata eſt ad Theatrum: Secunda " ſcil. Naturalis ad Mundum: Tertia ad Urbem. No Word here of *eternal Life*, as the Deſign of any of them. The Paſſage it ſelf fully excludes it, and, had it not been too long, had been worthy to be tranſcrib'd.

7. To draw to a Concluſion, Was it enough to the *Heathens* that theſe Things were *ſufficient*, albeit they did not know them to be ſo? Or was it needful that they ſhould know them to be ſo? If the *laſt* be ſaid, How could they be ſure about that, even the *vulgar Sort* of them, that our Author after all his Application to this Controverſy, could not win to be ſure of? If the *firſt* be ſaid, I would ask any *Deiſt*, Was not the End of *natural Religion* fix'd, and were they not certain? Or might they not, at leaſt, be fix'd and certain about it? If it was not, how could they uſe or choſe Means, or direct them to an *End* which was not fix'd, and they were not certain about? If it was, then with what Courage could they uſe Means with Reſpect to *an End* and *Means*, in the Uſe of which they had ſo many Difficulties to graple with; yet they could not be ſure that they were *ſufficient* by the leaſt Uſe of them to gain the *End*? Was it enough of Encouragement, That they might uſe them all Adventures, not knowing whether they were, in themſelves, *ſufficient* to reach the Mark or not? Methinks our Author is very defective as to Motives to excite to *Vertue*.

CHAP. XVIII.

Containing an Answer to some of the Deists *principal Arguments for the* Sufficiency of Natural Religion.

WE have now considered what the *Deists* plead from *universal Consent*; and have sufficiently clear'd that it is not by them proven, That the World was *agreed* as to *these Articles*; That indeed the World did not *agree* about them; That even they who own'd them, were led to this Acknowledgment, at least of some of them, rather by *Tradition* than *Nature's Light*; And that tho' they had acknowledg'd them, they are not *sufficient*. It now remains that we consider those Arguments, wherein they conceive the great Strength of their Cause to ly.

The first Argument, which indeed is the strongst the *Deists* can pretend unto, is thus propos'd by their admir'd *Herbert*:

De Rel. Gent. P. 4. " Et quidem quum Media ad Victum, Vestitumque " heic commoda suppeditant cunctis *Natura* sive " *Providentia* Rerum communis, suspicari non potui, eundem Deum, sive " ex Natura, sive ex Gratia, in suppeditandis ad beatiorem hoc nostro " Statum, Mediis, ulli Hominum deesse posse vel velle, adeo ut licet " Mediis illis parum rectè, vel feliciter usi sint *Gentiles*, haut ita tamen " per Deum optimum maximum steterit, quo minus salvi fierent. To the same Purpose speaks *Blount* in his *Religio Laici*, and *A. W.* in his Letter to him in the *Oracles of Reason*, of whom afterwards. The Force of all that is hear pleaded will best appear, if it is put into a clear Argument, and I shall be sure not to wrong it in the Proposal. The Argument runs thus,

The Goodness of God makes it necessary that all Men be provided in the Means necessary for future Bliss.

But all Men are provided in no other Means of Attaining future Bliss, save Nature's Light.

Therefore no other Means are necessary for all Men save the Light of Nature.

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The *Minor* or *ſecond Propoſition* needs not be proven, ſince it is own'd by thoſe, who maintain *Revelation*, That it is not given to all Men, and therefore that many have indeed no other *Light* to guide them, ſave that of *Nature*, in Matters of *Religion*, or, in any of their other Concerns.

The *firſt Propoſition, That the Goodneſs of God makes it Neceſſary that all Men be provided in the Means of Attaining future Bleſſedneſs*, is that which they are concern'd to prove. And the Strength of what they urge for Proof of it, amounts in ſhort to this;

The Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God ſeem to render it neceſſary that all Creatures, but more eſpecially the Rational, be provided in all Means neceſſary to obtain thoſe Ends they were made capable of, and oblidg'd to purſue.

But Men are made capable of, and oblidg'd to purſue eternal Happineſs and Felicity.

Therefore the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God make it neceſſary that all Men ſhould be provided in the Means neceſſary to obtain future and eternal Bliſs.

Here we have the Strength of their Cauſe, and we ſhall therefore conſider this Argument the more ſeriouſly, becauſe ſome ſeem to be taken with it, and look upon it as having much Force. Before I offer any direct anſwer, I ſhall make ſome *general Reflections* on it. The *firſt* Proceſs is only deſign'd to make Way for this *laſt*, which indeed is the Argument, and contains the Force of what is pleaded by the *Deiſts*.

Now concerning this Argument, we offer the few following Reflections, which will not a little weaken its Credit, and make it look ſuſpicious-like.

I. That Propoſition, whereon its whole Weight leans, *viz.* That the *Goodneſs of God obliges him to provide his Creatures in the Means neceſſary for Attaining their Ends*, is one of that Sort, anent which we may, in particular Caſes and Applications of it, be as eaſily miſtaken, and are as little *in Tuto*, to be poſitive in our Determinations, as any where elſe. For, albeit we are ſurer of nothing than that *God is Good*, and *muſt act congruouſly to his Goodneſs*, in general; yet when we come to make particular Inferences, and determine what, in Point of *Goodneſs* he is oblig'd to do, we are upon very ſlippery Ground, *eſpecially if we have not*, as in this Caſe it is, *the Effects to guide us*. For, beſides that *Goodneſs* is *free* in its *Effects*, and not affix'd to ſuch *ſtated Rules*, knowable by us, as *Juſtice* is, *divine Goodneſs*, in its Actings, is under the Conduct and Management of *all-comprehending Wiſdom*, which in every

Case wherein God is to Act, considers that a *Being* not only *infinitely Good* is to Act, but also *One*, who is *infinitely Wise*, *Holy*, *Just* and *Righteous*; and therefore *all-comprehending Wisdom* takes *under Consideration, or rather has in its View* the Concernment of all those Properties of the *Divine Nature*; and withall, all the Circumstances belonging to each particular Case, and takes Care that the Case, in all its Circumstances, be so manag'd, that not *One* of the *divine Perfections* shine to the Eclipsing of another: But that all of them appear with a suitable Lustre. Now, it is certain that we, who are of so narrow Understandings, and so many otherwise incapacitate to judge of the Ways of God, cannot reach either the different Interests of the *divine Properties*, and judge, in a particular circumstantiate Case, what befits *a God*, who is at once *Good*, *Holy*, *Wise* and *Righteous*; nor can we reach all that *infinite Variety* of Circumstances, which lying open to the *all-comprehending View* of *infinite* and *consummate Wisdom*, may make it appear quite otherwise to him, than to us. Hence, in Fact we see that an almost infinite Number of Things fall out in the Government of the World, which we know not how to reconcile to *divine Goodness*: And as many are left undone, which we would be apt to think *infinite Goodness* would make necessary to be done. This Consideration if well weighed, wou'd make Men very sparing, in determining any Thing necessary to be done, in Respect of *divine Goodness*, which either it is evident he has not done, or of which we are not sure that he has done it, which perhaps we shall make appear, if it is not, from what has been already said, evident to be the Case.

II. I observe as to what is subsum'd, *That Man is made capable of, & oblig'd in Duty to pursue eternal Felicity*; That albeit from *Revelation* we know this, as to Man in his *original Constitution* to be true, and by the *remaining Desires* of it we may guess that possibly it was so; yet if we set aside *divine Revelation*, and consider *Man* in his *present State*, concerning which the Question betwixt us and the *Deists* proceeds, we cannot by the help of *Nature's Light only*, with any Certainty conclude, That *Man is capable of, and oblig'd to pursue eternal Felicity*. We see the *Man* dissolv'd by *Death*. *Nature's Light* knows nothing of a *Resurrection*. Without a *Resurrection* there is nothing can be said for *Man's eternal Felicity*. Tho we grant his Soul to have no *Principle of Corruption* in it self, and so to be in this Sense, *Immortal*; yet this cannot secure us against the Fears of Annihilation: And the Gusts and Desires of *Felicity*, from which we many be induc'd to suspect some such State

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design'd for Man, being apparently frustrate, by the *Dissolution* of *Man*, to which they have a Respect, cannot but make Men, who have no more save *Nature*'s *Light*, hesitate mightily about this Assertion; since it is plain, that the Desires we find in our selves of *Felicity*, do respect the *whole Man*; and the Aversion we have to *Dissolution* respects our Natures in their *present entire Frame and Constitution*: Besides it is of Moment, That if *Man*, *now entire*, is at a Loss how to judge of the *Ends* for which he was made, much more must he be suppos'd in a Strait how to judge, and determine for what *Ends*, *any particular Part belonging to his Constitution* was design'd after the *Dissolution* of the *whole* in a *separate State*, that is, in all its Concernments, so much *hid from and unknown to us*. Further, albeit undoubtedly, as long as we are, it is our Duty to make it our *chief Aim* to please God, and seek for *Felicity* only in him; yet since, not only our *Beings*, but that *Felicity*, which may be suppos'd attainable by us, are Emanations from *soveraign*, *free* and *undeserv'd Bounty*, without some Intimation from him, in Way of Promise, we can draw, no sure Conclusion, as to its Continuance, were we innocent, much less can we, being guilty.

III. This Argument concludes nothing in Favours of the *Deists*; whatever it may say for the *Heathens*. For were it granted, That God is oblig'd to provide all Men in the Means necessary to *future Felicity*; and that he has not given all Men any other Means; yet it cannot be hence inferr'd, That he has given no other Means to some. In this Case, if all this were granted, which yet we have not done, it would follow, That they, who have no other Means, must look on these as *sufficient*, and that they really are so: But still God is left at Liberty to prescribe other Dutys to any particular Persons, or Nations, by *Revelation*; and if this *Revelation* come, they are oblig'd, to whom it comes, to attend, receive and obey it. Now if the *Scriptures* be a *divine Revelation*, attended with sufficient Evidence, which the *Deists* must either allow, or overthrow what it pleads for it self; they are everlastingly undone, unless they receive it, and comply with it.

IV. I observe, That the *Conclusion* of this Argument, which it aims at the Establishment of, *viz. That God in Point of Goodness, must provide all Men in the Means necessary to future Felicity, and consequently has done it*, is exceedingly prejudic'd, by its lying cross to the plain Sense and Experience of the World in all Ages, as has been plainly made appear. Now in this Case, where the *Principles* or *Premisses* are dark, and such whereabout we may easily be mistaken, which is the Case here, as appears

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by the *two first Reflections* : And the *Conclusion*, carries a manifest Contradiction to what we must certainly know, and have Experience of; in this Case we have Reason to conclude, That there lies certainly a Fallacy or Mistake in one or other of the *Principles*; tho' we cannot discover presently where it precisely is. And therefore, albeit Men could not easily except against the *Premisses* or *Principles*, whence it is deduc'd; yet they would think themselves sufficiently warranted, if not plainly to reject, yet to be shy in admitting the *Conclusion:* forasmuch as the admitting the *Conclusion* will oblidge them to deny what their own Sense and Experience, as well as that of the World, assures them about : Whereas, it is much more reasonable to think and determine that there lies some Fallacy in the *Priniples*, tho' it may be they are not in Case to detect it. No Man, by the Arguments against *Motion*, can be brought to question its *Being*, much less its *Possibility*; yet there are thousands, even no mean Scholars, who cannot answer the Arguments that conclude against it. But in very Deed, this Argument is not so strong, as to need so much Nicety.

Having thus far weakened it by these *general Reflections*, I shall next lay down and clear some *Propositions* that will lay a Foundation for a closs Answer to it.

I. All Men, at present, are involv'd in *Guilt*, have *corrupt Inclinations*, and are under an *Inability* to yield *perfect Obedience* to the *Law*, they are subjected to. That all in more or less, are *guilty of Sin*, cannot be well deny'd, and we have heard the *Oracles of Reason* owning, *That all do err sometimes, even the best, in their Actions. That Men are corrupt*, or have *corrupt Inclinations*, has been above sufficiently evinc'd. That all are under some Sort of *Inability* to yield *perfect Obedience*, is atteSted by the Experience of all; and besides, is an inevitable Consequent of the Former: For it is not possible to suppose one possest of *corrupt Inclinations*, and yet able to yield *perfect Obedience*. Nor need we stand to prove what the *Deists* own : For A. W. in his Letter to *Charles Blount*, speaking of the *Law of Nature*, says, *I don't say that we are able perfectly to obey it.* I dispute not now of what Sort this *Inability* is, whether only *moral*, such as arises from the *Will's Inclination to Evil*; or *natural*, which imports such an *Inability* as supposes the Nature of the *Faculties vitiate*, tho' the Faculties are not wanting. The *Condemnings* of our own Hearts, and the *Nature* of the *moral Government* we are under, sufficiently assures us, it is such as does not excuse from *Fault*; and further we are not concern'd : though, after all, I don't understand how the *Will* can be fix'd in an *Inclination* to *Evil*, or *Aversation* from *Good*, unless the

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Nature of the *Will* be supposed affected with some Indisposition, tho' the Faculty is not remov'd. But of this only by the By. It is enough to our present Purpose, that Man is *guilty*, *corrupt*, and thence *unable*. He that will deny this, must suppose us blind and senseless.

II. If *Reason* can ascertain of any Thing, it does of this, that Things were not *originally* thus with Man, or that Man, when he was first made, was not thus *guilty*, *corrupt* or *impotent*. None will dare to say, that at first he was *guilty*. And to assert him either *corrupt* or *impotent*, overthrows all the just Notions we have of the *Deity*. How can it be suppos'd, That *infinite Wisdom*, could enact *Laws*, which were not only not likely to take Effect, but really could not possibly be obey'd by Men subjected to them! How can we suppose *infinite Goodness* to establish *Laws* under a *Penalty*, and deny the *Powers*, which were indispensibly requisite to obey them, and without which it was not possible to evite the *Penalty*! How can we suppose *infinite Righteousness* and *Holiness* to consent to a Constitution of this Kind! How is it conceivable, that a God, Wise, Just and Good, should have *originally implanted* in our Natures *Inclinations* contrary to those *Laws*, that were the Transcript of, and bore the Impress of all these Perfections! Or, how can we once dream that he implanted *Inclinations*, which it was criminal to satisfy or comply with! For my Part, I see not what can be reasonably said in Answer to this.

III. It is further evident, That Man could not have fallen into this State he now is in, or from that wherein he was made, but by his own Default. If this is deny'd, I enquire, Where shall the Blame be lodg'd? will they lodge it at God's Door? Besides, that this is Blasphemy, it is further evident, that all the former Absurdities will recur: For it is to no Purpose to give *Powers*, and take them away again without any Default in the Person who loses them, the *Obligation* to *Obedience* or *Suffering* upon *Disobedience* still continuing. Nor can it be lodg'd upon any other, because if Man is without his own Fault, robb'd of the *Powers* necessary to obey the Obligation to *Obedience*, cannot be righteously continu'd. Nor was it consistent with the *divine Wisdom*, to have oblig'd Men to *Obedience*, under a *Penalty*, while there was a *Possibility* of Man's losing the *Power* to obey, without a Fault on his own Part. It remains then, That Man has by his own Fault forfeited what he has in this Part lost. And to this our own Conscience, and the Consciences of all Sinners, who are sensible of Sin, consent, That *God is free*, and *we guilty*.

IV. Hereon it inevitably follows, That Man is at present in a *corrupt sinful* and *impotent State*, into which by his own Default, he has fallen.

fallen. Nor see I how it is possible to evite this, which only sums up the three preceeding Assertions. The *first* whereof is undeniable with sober and ingenuous Persons, being attested by the plainest and clearest Experience, and the other *two* stand firm upon the clearest Deductions our Reason can make. If any *Deist* shall say, *How can this be that we are fallen into such a State?* I answer 1. The Question is not, *How can it be*, but *is it so?* I think I have said enough to clear it is so. 2. Hereby we may see *Natural Religion* has its Mysteries too, as well as *Reveal'd*. And I think I have told mo, than one of them. 3. If this will not satisfie, then get as much *Faith* and *Humility*, as will teach to subject to *supernatural Instruction*, and you may come to understand how it came to be so. If you will not, you must remain in the Dark, and there in no Help for it.

Now I have laid a plain Foundation for an Answer to this Argument, whereon the *Deists* value themselves so much. It was not because I thought so long an Answer needful for the Argument: But to make the Matter a little more plain, that we have Discours'd it at this Length.

The Argument then runs thus, *The Wisdom and Goodness of God make it necessary that all his Creatures should be provided in the Means necessary for attaining the End of their Being, and this holds especially as to the Rational: But Man was made capable of eternal Felicity, or this is the End of his Being.*

I need say nothing more to what is subsum'd, than has been said above. I answer to the *first Proposition*, be it allow'd that *God's Wisdom* and *Goodness* requir'd the *Rational Creature* should be provided in the *Means necessary* for the Attainment of the *End* of his *Being*, *in his first Make and original State*: Yet neither God's *Goodness*, nor his *Wisdom*, oblige him to *restore Man*, if by his own Fault, he has fallen from that *State*, wherein at first he was made. Now this is the Case with *Man* in his *present State*, as we have told above.

If it is said, This is but our Assertion, That *Man is in a lapsed State*. I answer 1. I think it is more than an Assertion, and must do so till I see what I have offer'd for Proof of the foregoing Propositions fairly answer'd. Nay till I see the whole Arguments that have heretofore been offer'd against the *Sufficiency of Natural Religion*, answer'd. For, I think they all prove that *Man* at present *in a lapsed State*. But 2. I add, That the *Deists* must mind, we are upon the *Defensive*, and it's theirs to prove, That Man in his present Condition is not so stated, as

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we ſay. It was *ex abundanti* for clearing of Truth, that I condeſcend to prove this. It was enough to me to have deny'd that Man is *now* in his *original State*, and put the Proof upon them; in Regard they affirm, and the whole Streſs and Force of their Argument leans upon that Suppoſition, which we deny.

The ſecond Argument on which the *Deiſts* lay much Streſs, is drawn from the Suppos'd ill Conſequences attending our Opinion. They pretend that it's *horribly cruel* to imagine, That all the *Heathen World* were loſt. This they inculcate upon all Occaſions, rather to expoſe their *Adverſarys*, I am afraid, than to confirm the *Truth*. The Sum of this Argument we ſee propos'd by *Herbert* in his Words above quoted. Where he tells us, That all will own his Articles to be good; *Ad Salutem tamen Æternam comparandam, non ſufficere prohibebunt nonnulli. Cæterum, qui ita locutus fuerit, ne ille quidem audax; nedum ſævum temerarium; Effatum mea Sententiâ protulerit.* The Short of the Matter is, *If Natural Religion is not ſufficient, we muſt give all the Heathen World for loſt; but this is a cruel, and harſh Aſſertion, injurious to God, and cruel to ſuch a vaſt Number of Men.* And here they raiſe a horrible Out-cry. With this they begin, and with this end. De Rel. Gentil. P. 217.

This Argument, albeit it has no Force, as ſhall be evinc'd anon, yet makes ſuch a Noiſe at a Diſtance, that a great many ingenuous Spirits ſeem to be mightily affected with it: I conceive therefore it will not be improper to lay open the Cauſes of this, and the rather becauſe they dicover where the Fallacy of the Argument lies, and whence it is that Men are ſo eaſily prepoſſeſs'd in this Matter. To this Purpoſe then it is to be obſerv'd,

1. That there are ſome Things which in themſelves are not deſirable; to which therefore no *uncorrupted Rational Nature*, much leſs that of God, could incline *meerly upon their own Account*: Which yet, in ſome *circumſtantiate Caſes*, may be every Way congruous to *Juſtice* and *Righteouſneſs*; yea, and worthy of the *Wiſe* and *Good God*: The Torment of any *Rational Creature* is not in, or *for it ſelf* deſirable: *God* has no Pleaſure in it. The *Nature of Man*, if not deeply corrupted, yea, and diveſted of *Humanity*, recoils at it; yet there is none, who will not allow that in many *circumſtantiate Caſes*, it is not only worthy of, but plainly neceſſary in Point of *Wiſdom* and *Juſtice*, for the moſt merciful of Men, to inflict upon their fellow Creatures ſuch Puniſhments, as their own Natures do ſhrink at the Apprehenſions of. Nor

can it be deny'd of the *Holy God*, notwithstanding of, and without Prejudice to his *infinite Goodness*, may, nay in some Cases must likewise thus punish his own Creatures. Now, if such Things are represented as they are, in their *own Natures*, without a due Consideration of *Circumstances* and *Ends* inducing to them, it is easy to make them appear not only *hard*, but *odious*.

II. However *just*, *righteous* and *congruous such Actions* are; yet he who undertakes to expose them as *cruel*, *barbarous* and *hard*, especially, if he has to do with Persons, weak, ignorant, partial in Favours of the Sufferer, and averse from the Author of the Torment, has a far more easy Task, even tho' he is of weaker Abilities, and imploy'd in Defence of the worst Cause, than he who undertakes to defend such Actions. The Reason of this is obvious; all that makes to his Purpose, who designs to expose the *Action* as *cruel*, lies open in its Nature and Horrour to the Thoughts of the most inconsiderate; and if to this he only sets off the Representation with a little Art, so as to touch the Affections, which in this Case is easily done, he has carried his Point; the Judgement is not only deceiv'd, but the Affections are so deeply engag'd in the Quarrel, as to preclude the Light of the most nervous and valide Defence imaginable. Whereas on the other Hand, all Things are quite otherwise. The Circumstances inducing to such Actions, are usually deep, and not so easily discernable, and therefore not to be found out, without much Consideration; and when they are found out, they are not easily collected, laid together, and rang'd in that Order, which is necessary to set the Atrocity of the Crime in a due Light, especially where the Persons, who are to judge, are weak and byas'd. Besides, the Evil of those Crimes, being for most Part more Spiritual, makes not so strong an Impression on the Affections. And this Consideration holds more specially true, where the Question is concerning the *Judgments* of God, which proceed upon that comprehensive View, which *infinite Wisdom* has of all Circumstances, that accent the Evil, aggrege the Fault, and enhance the Guilt of Sins committed against him; many of which Circumstances no mortal Penetration can reach. And further, this more particularly holds true, where it is not God himself, but Man that pleads on Behalf of the Actings of God. It's very observable to this Purpose, That Historians of all Nations almost condescend upon Instances, wherein the Sight of severe, but just Punishment of atrocious Offenders, has not only excited the Compassion of the *Populace* or *Vulgar* to the *Sufferers*, but enrag'd them against the *Judges*, even they, who would have been ready

ready to reclaim againſt the *Partiality* and *Negligence* of the *Judge*, if the *Crimes* had been paſs'd without *juſt Puniſhment*, when they ſee the *Puniſhment* inflicted through a fond Sort of Compaſſion to the Sufferers, complain of the Cruelty of the Judge, laying aſide all Thoughts of the Atrocity of the Crime.

III. Where they, who make it their Buſineſs to traduce *ſuch Actions*, as *hard* and *cruel*, and they alſo, whom they labour to perſwade of this, are intereſs'd by Alliance, or common Intereſt in the Sufferers, are themſelves in the ſame Condemnation, or, upon the ſame and ſuch like Accounts, obnoxious to that Juſtice, which adjudges thoſe Sufferers to theſe Torments, which they ſtudy to repreſent *cruel* and *barbarous*: It is no Wonder to ſee the Repreſentation make ſuch deep Impreſſions, and rivet ſuch a Perſwaſion, That the *Puniſhments* are *cruel* and *hard*, as may not only byas a little againſt any Defence that can be made for the Judge, but as even may make them refuſe to admit of any Apology, or condeſcend ſo far as to give any that can be made a fair Hearing. But all unbyaſs'd Perſons muſt allow, that ſuch can never be admitted Judges competent, as to what is juſt or unjuſt, hard or otherwiſe; the Caſe being, in Effect, their own, and they by this Means being made both *Judge* and *Party*.

IV. However great, terrible and heavy any *Puniſhment* God is ſuppos'd to inflict, may in its own Nature appear, or how great ſoever the *Number* of the *Sufferers* may be, yet we can never, from the *Severity* of the *Puniſhment*, or the *Number* of the *Sufferers* diſprove its Juſtice; unleſs we can make it appear, That no Circumſtances, which can poſſibly fall under the Reach of *Infinite Wiſdom*, can render *ſuch Severity* towards ſo many Perſons, worthy of him. Now, however eaſy this Undertaking may appear to Perſons leſs conſiderate, it will have a far other Aſpect to ſuch as impartially ponder, that all Men are manifeſtly partial in Favours of thoſe of their own Race, and in a Caſe which is, or may be their own, and have no ſuitable Apprehenſions of the Concernment of the *divine Glory* in it, or no due Regard for them: Beſides, ſuch is their Shallowneſs, that they can neither have under View many important Circumſtances, that are fully expos'd to *All-comprehending Wiſdom*, nor can they fully underſtand the Weight, even of theſe Circumſtances, they either do, or may, in ſome Meaſure know.

V. Every Man, who is wiſe and juſt, when either he hears of, or ſees any Puniſhment that appears very ſevere and terrible, muſt ſuſpend his Judgment as to the Hardſhip of it, till the Author of it is fully heard

as to the Inducements, and neither ought he deny what his Eyes see, his Ears hear, or he is otherwise inform'd of, upon sufficient Evidences. He is neither to question the *Matter of Fact*, nor condemn the *Judge* of *Cruelty*, because of the *seeming Severity* of the *Punishment*. This is a Piece of common Justice, which every Judge, even amongst Men, may reasonably claim from his fellow Creatures, albeit his Actions and the Reasons of them, cannot be suppos'd to ly so far out of their Ken, as those of the *divine Judgments*: Much more is it reasonable for Men to pay this Deference to God, considering how unable the most elevated Capacities are to penetrate into all the Reasons, which an *Infinitely Wise God* may have under View; and there is the more Reason for this, since Man also is naturally so very apt to be partial in his own Favours, and fail of giving a due Regard in his Thoughts unto the Concernments of *divine Glory*.

These Observations, as they are in themselves unquestionably true, so they do fully lay open the Causes of that general Acceptance, which this Plea of the *Deists* has obtain'd with less attentive Minds; and how little Weight is to be laid upon them. In Word, if they are well considered, they are sufficient to enervate the Force of this whole Plea.

But least the *Deists* should think their Argument slighted, or that Conscience of our own Weakness, makes us choose long Weapons to fight with, I shall closely consider the Argument. Perhaps what makes a Noise, at a Distance, will be less frightful if we take a nearer View of it. We deny that the *Heathen World* had *Means sufficient for obtaining Eternal Happiness*. The *Deists* say, This is *cruel* and *rash*. Let us now see whence this may be proven.

I. Doth *our Cruelty* lie in this, That we have laid down an Assertion, upon which it follows, That in Fact *all the Heathen World are lost*? But now do not the *Deists* own, That in very Deed, *all impenitent Sinners must perish*? No Doubt they do, who talk so much of the *Necessity of Repentance*. Well, are not all who want *Revelation*, guilty of gross Sins? Is not *Idolatry* a *gross Sin*? are they not all plung'd in the *Guilt* of it? *Socrates*, the most considerable Person for his *Vertue*, that liv'd before Christ, cannot be excus'd. He deny'd his Disowning the *Gods of Athens*. He join'd in their *Worship*. If this was against his Conscience, the more was his Fault, and, even with his dying Breath, he order'd a Cock to be sacrificed to *Esculapius*. *Epictetus*, the best perhaps among the *Philosophers* who liv'd after Christ, in his *Enchiridion* enjoins to worship after the Mode

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of the Country where we live; and no Doubt practis'd as he taught Gentlemen, condeſcend, if ye can, upon one, who was not guilty of groſs Sins. Did they repent? What Evidence bring you of it? That the Multitude liv'd and dy'd *impenitent*, none dare queſtion. That there was one *penitent*, none can prove. That the beſt of them were guilty of *groſs Sins* cannot be deny'd, and there is no Evidence of their *Penitence*. Yea, there is no Reaſon to think that they look'd upon *Repentance* as a *Vertue*; but much to the Contrary. Well, Gentlemen, don't your *own Principles* conclude, That the Bulk of the *Heathen World* are, in Fact inevitably loſt? And that there is but little Ground of Hope, and great Reaſon to fear, That it far'd not much better with the few *Virtuoſi*?

II. But doth the *Cruelty* ly in the *Number* of the Perſons ſuppos'd to be loſt? No. This cannot be ſaid. For if the Cauſe be ſufficient, the Number of the Condemn'd makes not the Condemnation the more cruel. Beſides, let them go as narrowly to Work as they can, they are few, very few, for whom they can plead Exemption: And their Pleas for that Handful will be very lame. So that for any Thing I ſee, the *Deiſts*, in this Reſpect, are not like to be much more merciful than we.

III. But perhaps the *Cruelty* lies in this, That we ſuppoſe them condemn'd *without a Cauſe*, or without *one* that is *ſufficient*. But this we do not, we ſuppoſe none to be condemn'd, who are not *Sinners againſt God*, and *Tranſgreſſors of a Law* ſtamp'd with his *Authority*, which they had Acceſs to know. And were not the beſt of them guilty of groſs Sins? What evidence have we of their *Repentance*? Is it not juſt, ev'n according to the *Deiſts Principles*, to condemn *impenitent Sinners*? Thus we ſuppoſe none condemn'd, but for their *Sins*.

IV. But perhaps the *Cruelty* lies in this, That we ſuppoſe them all *equally miſerable*, *Socrates* to be in no better Caſe than *Nero*. But this follows not upon our Aſſertion. None are ſuppos'd miſerable beyond the juſt Demerit of their Sins.

V. Well, perhaps the *Cruelty* lies in this, That we ſuppoſe their *Torments* after this Life, to be intenſe in *Degree*, or of a *longer Continuance* than their *Sins deſerve*. This we are ſure of, that their *Sins* being *Offences* againſt God, deſerve a *deeper Puniſhment*, than ſome Men can well think of; and that God is juſt, and will proportion *Puniſhments* exactly to *Offences*, and have a juſt Regard, as well to the *real Alleviations* as *Aggravations* of every Sin. And if God has, in his Word, determin'd that

that every Sin committed against him, deserves *eternal Punishment*, no Doubt his *Judgment is according to Truth*. We are not Judges in the Case.

VI. Well, but the Rashness and *Cruelty* perhaps lies here, That by our Assertion we are oblidg'd to pass a *positive* and *peremptory Judgment* about the *eternal State* of *all the Heathen World*, That they are gone to *Hell*, and laid under *everlasting Punishments*, leaving no Room for the *Mercy* of God. But to this we say, Revelation has taught us, ev'n where there is the justest Ground of Fear, to speak *modestly* of the *eternal Condition* of others, and to leave the Judgment concerning this to the *righteous God*, to whom alone it belongs, and who will *do no Iniquity*. That all the *Heathen World* deserve *Punishment* cannot, without Impudence, be deny'd. That God will pass any of them without inflicting the Punishment they deserve, neither *Revelation* nor *Reason* give us any Ground to think. That none of them shall be punished *beyond their Deservings*, *Scripture* and *Reason* demonstrate. But in these Things our Assertion of the *Insufficiency of Natural Religion* is not concern'd. It obliges us to pass no Judgment further than this, " That the Heathens, and all who want Revelation, had " no Means sufficient to bring them to eternal Happiness, and that " consequently they had no Reason to expect it; and we have no Rea- " son to conclude them possess'd of it. And in this Case we leave them to be dispos'd of, as to their State, after this Life, by the *Wisdom* and *Justice* of God.

VII. But perhaps the *Cruelty* lies in this, That they are suppos'd to want the *Means necessary* to attain *eternal Happiness*, while yet they are capable of, and expos'd to *eternal Misery* for their Sins. But 1. How will the *Deists* prove, That God, without a *Promise*, is oblig'd to give Man *eternal Happiness* for his *Obedience*? 2. Since none of them are to be punish'd beyond the just Demerit of their Sins, may not God righteously inflict that Punishment, what ever it is, their Sins, in strict Justice, deserve, tho he had never propos'd a *Reward*, which Reason can never prove our *best Actions* worthy of, even tho' we had continu'd innocent? But 3. That Man, in his present Case, has dropt the Knowledge of *eternal Felicity*, and the Means of attaining it, and is unable to attain it, is owing not to any Defect of *Bounty* and *Goodness* of God, much less of *Justice*; but only unto the *Sin* of Man, as has been demonstrate in our Answer to the foregoing Argument, by Reasons drawn from *Nature's Light*. Notwithstanding of which, it must still be own'd,

own'd, That *Nature's Light* cannot acquaint us, how Man fell into his preſent lmentable Condition, as we have above made appear.

VIII. But is it not ſafer and more modeſt, may ſome ſay, to ſuppoſe, That God of his *great Mercy* did, by *Revelation*, communicate to ſome of the beſt of the *Heathens*, who improv'd *Nature's Light* to the greateſt Advantage, what was further neceſſary to their *Salvation*, or, at leaſt, to bring them into a State of *Happineſs*, of ſomewhat *inferior Degree* to that which is prepar'd for *Chriſtians*. I know many *Chriſtian Writers* of old and of late have multiply'd Hypotheſes of this Kind: Some have ſuppos'd *Apparitions of Angels*, *Saints*, nay *damn'd Souls* and *Devils*; of which Stories I am told that *Collius* Diſcourſes at large in the *ſecond Book* of his Treatiſe *De Animabus Paganorum*. Some tell us, "That to ſuch of them "as liv'd vertuouſly, God always at ſome Time or "other ſent ſome Man or Angel ſavingly to illu- "minate them. So the *Areopagites*; ſome tell us of *Chriſt's* Preaching to them in *Purgatory*, ſo *Clemens Alexandrinus*; ſome will have them inſtructed by the *Sibyllæ*, as the ſame Author elſewhere; ſome talk of their Commerce with the *Jews*, in which Way no Doubt ſome of them came to ſaving Acquaintance with God; others ſay, That *upon their worthy Improvement* of their *Naturals* God might and did reveal *Chriſt* to them and *Spirituals*, becauſe *habenti dabitur*, ſo *Arminius*; and of this *Herbert* frequently intimates his Approbation, but with an evident Contradiction to, and Subverſion of his whole Story about the *Sufficiency* of *Natural Religion*. Beſides, the Bottom of this is a rotten *Pelagian* Suppoſition of a *Merit* in their *good Works*: And that *habenti dabitur*, ſpoken of in another Caſe, after all the Pains ſome are at to ſtretch it, will not reach this Caſe: And after all we are left in the Dark, as to the Way wherein they will have *Supernaturals* communicate to them. The late ingenious Author of the *Conference with a Theiſt*, ſuppoſes a Place provided for the *ſober Pagans* in another World, wherein they ſhall enjoy a *conſiderable Happineſs*, and wreſts what our LORD ſays to his Diſciples, *Joh.* 14. 3. of the *many Manſions that are in his Father's Houſe*, to favour his Notion. But now as to all theſe Suppoſitions and others of the ſame Alloy, however their Authors may pleaſe themſelves in them, I think they are to be rejected. Nor is this from any Defect of *Charity* to the *Heathens*, but becauſe they are ſupported by no Foundation, either in *Scripture* or *Rea-*

De cœleſti Hierar. Ch. 9.

Strom. *Lib.* 6.

Nichol. *Confer. Part.* 2. *P.* 80.

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son. However some of them are possible, yet generally speaking, none of them have the Countenance so much as of a probable Argument. The Scripture Proof, adduc'd by that last mention'd ingenious Author, has no Weight in it. There is no Countenance given to it from the Context, nor any other Place of Scripture, and I cannot approve of his Boldness in stretching our Lord's Words beyond what his Scope requires. But these Things have been consider'd at length by others, whom the Reader may consult. All these Suppositions are at best but ingenious Fancies, wherewith their Authors may please themselves, but can never satisfy others. Nor can they be of any Advantage to the *Heathens*. I think I have made it sufficiently appear in the foregoing Discourse, That they wanted *Means sufficient* to lead them to *Salvation*, and so had no Ground to support a reasonable Hope of it. It is granted ev'n by those, whose peculiar Hypotheses in Divinity, lead them to be most favourable to the *Heathens*, That *they had no federal Certainty of Salvation*; and for any *uncovenanted Mercy*, of which some talk, I know nothing about it. *Scripture* is silent. *Reason* can determine nothing in it; and therefore Disputes about it are to be weav'd. It's unwarrantable Curiosity for Men to pry into the Secrets of God; *Things that are reveal'd do belong to us.* Where *Revelation* stops, we are to stop. Ev'n *Herbert* himself dare carry the Matter no farther than a *May be*; and what may be, may not be.

See Anth. Tuckney *Appen. to his Ser. on Act* 4. 12.

CHAP. XIX.

Wherein Herbert's *Reasons for Publishing his Books in Defence of* Deism *are examin'd and found weak.*

THE learn'd *Herbert*, toward the Close of his Book *De Religione Laici*, to justifie the Publication of his Thoughts, as to a *catholick Religion*, common to all Mankind, mentions seven suppos'd Advantages of this Opinion, or so many Pleas for *Deism.* What Weight there is in them, we shall now consider.

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He introduces himſelf with a Proteſtation that he publiſh'd not his Book with any ill Deſign againſt *Chriſtianity*, which he honours with the Title of *optima Religio*: But on the Contray ſays, That he aim'd at Eſtabliſhing it, and intended to ſtrengthen true Faith, " Denique me Animo " adeo non *optimæ Religioni* inſenſo, aut a *vera* " *Fide* alieno Tractatum hunc edidiſſe teſtor; ut utramque ſtatumi- " nare in Animo habuerim, &c. Herbert *Relig. Laici*, *P.* 28.

I ſhall not dive into his Deſigns; for which he has long ago accounted unto the only competent Judge. But of the Deſign, or rather Tendency of his Books, we may ſafely Judge. And as to this I ſay, That if it is granted, that the *Scriptures* are the only Standard of the *Chriſtian Religion*, which cannot modeſtly be deny'd; I ſhall upon this Suppoſition undertake to maintain againſt any who will defend him, That his Books aim at the *utter Subverſion* of the *Chriſtian Religion*, that his *Principles* overthrow entirely the *Authority* of the *Scriptures*, and are not only inconſiſtent with, but deſtructive to the *Eſſentials* of *Chriſtianity*. And I further add, That this is every where ſo obvious in his Writings, that it will require a ſtrange Stretch of Charity, to believe our Author cou'd be Ignorant of it.

Our Author having told us what was not his Deſign, proceeds next to condeſcend upon the *Reaſons* inducing him to aſſert this *Common Religion*. And

I. He tells us that he maintains this *Common Religion*, " Quod pro- " videntiam divinam, &c. Becauſe it vindicates the *univerſal Provi-* " *dence* of God, God's Principal Attribute, whoſe Dignity can never " be ſufficiently ſupported. Neither do any *particular Religion*, or " *Faith* (to give you our Author's own Words, *Fides quantumvis laxa*) " maintain this, ſo as to repreſent God's Care of all Mankind, in pro- " viding for them ſuch Common Principles as thoſe contain'd in " our *catholick Truths*.

Here our Author teaches two Things, and I think them both Falſe. (1) He tells us, *That his catholick Religion vindicates the univerſal Providence of God, or ſerves to maintain its Honour*. This I think Falſe. The Foundation of it we have prov'd to be not only precarious, but falſe. For we have clear'd, That his *five Articles* did not *univerſally obtain*; and further, that if they had, they were not *ſufficient* to *Happineſs*. Yea our Author himſelf, after he has told us, That the *univerſal Providence* of God cannot be maintain'd, unleſs we ſuppoſe

him to have provided all his Creatures, in the *Means necessary* for obtaining their *Happiness*, next informs us that he has provided Man in no *other Means*, save these *five Articles*. And he further tells us in his Words above quoted, That he dare not *positively say* they are *Sufficient*, nor can we be sure of it, since it depends upon God's secret Judgments, which we cannot certainly know. And we have heard *Blount* above own, That *Deism* is not safe, unless it be piec'd out by some Help from *Christianity*. Well, is this the Way our Author asserts the *Honour* of *Divine universal Providence*, first to tell us, That its *Honour* cannot be maintain'd without supposing a *sufficient Religion universally to have obtain'd*, and then to tell us that he is *not sure*, that ever there was such a *Religion*? Is not this the plain Way to bring the *universal Providence* of God in Question?

De Rel. Laici, P. 1, 4.

De Rel. Gentil. P. 217.

Orac. of Reas. P. 87.

Again 2ly, Our Author teaches, *That no particular Religion can support the Honour of universal Providence.* This I take to be also false. The *Christian Religion* asserts and proves, That God, who has created all Things, preserves them, and governs them in a Way suitable to their Nature and Circumstances, and in so far clears the Equity of God's Proceedings with the *Heathen World*, in particular, as may satisfie sober Men. It acquaints us, That God did, at first, provide Man in a *Covenant Security* for *eternal Happiness*, and in *Means sufficient* for obtaining of it; that Man, by his own Fault, incapacitate himself for the Use of these Means, and forfeit the Advantage of the *Covenant Security*; that God, in Justice, hath left the *Heathen World* under the Disadvantage of that Forfeiture; that during the Time he sees meet to spare them, he governs them, in such a Way as is suitable to their lapsed State, of which we have spoke before. We confess we are not able to explain all the hard Chapters in the *Book of Providence*, and solve every difficulty relating thereto; but this affords no Ground for the Denial either of God's *General* or *Special Providence*. As the Difficulties about God's *Omniscience*, *Omnipresence*, *Eternity*, &c. will not justifie a Denial of these *Attributes*, or the *Existence* of a *Deity* vested with them; so neither will the Difficulties about *Providence* justifie a Refusal of it; and if this Vindication of *Providence* fail of giving Satisfaction, I am sure *Herbert*'s will never satisfie.

What our Author adds about his *Fides quantumvis laxa*, which he supposes some to stand up for, and maintain as a *sufficient Religion*, I do not

not well underſtand. But yet ſince this Expreſſion is very oft us'd in the Writings of this Author, in Reproach of *particular Religions*, eſpecially the *Chriſtian*, which lays the greateſt Streſs upon *Faith*, it cannot be paſs'd without ſome Remark. That which our Author ſeems to intend by this *Fides quantumvis laxa*, or *Faith how lax ſo ever it be*, is a *Faith* that *conſiſts in a general Aſſent to the Truth of the Doctrines, without any correſpondent Influence upon Practice.* And he would bear us in hand that the *Chriſtian Religion*, or, at leaſt, *Chriſtians*, do reckon *this Sufficient* to Salvation. This is a baſe and diſingenuous Calumny. And our Author could not but know it to be ſuch, if he was acquaint either with the *Scriptures* or the *Writings* and Lives of *that Set* of *Chriſtians* againſt whom this Calumny is particularly levell'd, who unanimouſly teach, That the Faith that's available is that which *works by Love*, and is to be found only in them, who are *created in Chriſt Jeſus to good Works.* If *Herbert* was a Stranger to the one or the other, he was the unmeeteſt Perſon in the World to ſet up for a Judge and Cenſurer of them.

II. The next Advantage that *Herbert* condeſcends on, of his *catholick Religion*, is, " Quod probam Facultatum Homini
" inſitarum Conformationem, Uſumque doceat. Herbert *Rel. Laici*,
" Nulla enim datur Veritas catholica, quæ non *P.* 28.
" in Foro interno deſcribitur, vel non illuc ſal-
" tem neceſſariò reducitur. That is, *This alone teaches Man the due Uſe and Application of his Faculties.* But this is only our Author's Aſſertion. *Chriſtianity* is no leſs conſiſtent with the due Uſe of our Faculties and their Application to their proper Objects, than our Author's *Religion*. It deſtroys none of them, lays none of them aſide, and violents none of them; but reſtores, improves and elevates them to their moſt noble and proper Uſe.

Our Author adds, for a Confirmation of his Aſſertion, *That there is no catholick Verity, but what either is inſcrib'd in the Mind, or what may be reduc'd to ſome innate Truth.* Whether there is any *Verity* inſcrib'd in the Mind in our Author's Senſe, I queſtion. Mr.
Lock has proven, That there is none ſuch, and in Lock *Eſſay of hum.*
particular has evinc'd that our Author's *five* *Underſ. Book* 1. *Ch.* 3.
Articles are not *innate Truths*, no not according to §. 15, 16, 17, 18,
the Deſcription he himſelf gives of ſuch *Notices*. 19.
He examines the Characters of *innate Truth* given by our Author, and undertakes to ſhew them not applicable to his *five Articles.*

III. Our Author tells he embrac'd this *catholick Religion, quod Incontroversa a Controversis distinguat*, &c. Its needless to repeat all our Author's Words here. What he says is in short this, That *particular Religion* (and here he must be understood to speak particularly of *Christianity*) *contain austere and frightful Doctrines that prejudge some Men of squeemish Stomacks at all Religion* (and it is not to be wonder'd at, That Men, who have no Heart to any Religion, are disgusted easily?) But our Author has provided them of *one* that will not offend the most nice and delicate Palate, as consisting of *Principles universally agreed to*; which he supposes such Persons will readily close with, and so retain *some Religion*, whereas otherwise they would have *none*.

Here our Author evidently designs a Thrust at the *Christian Religion*, & insinuates, That it is stuffed with *austere and horrid Doctrines*. I know full well what are the Doctrines he particularly aims at: The Doctrines concerning the *Corruption of Man's Nature, the Decrees of God, the Satisfaction of Christ* are particularly intended. But if these Doctrines are consider'd as deliver'd in the *Scriptures*, or taught by *Christians*, according to the *Scriptures*, what is there *offensive* in them? what *horrid* or *frightful*?

I do indeed grant, That some *Christians*, through their *Weakness without any ill Design*, have so represented, or rather mis-represented some of these Points, particularly concerning *the Decrees of God*, as to give Offence to sober Persons of all Perswasions. But as to this, they, and they only are to bear the Blame. As for the *Doctrines, what have they done?* Must the Fault of the *Professors* be cast on the *Religion* they profess? This no reasonable Man will allow to be just.

I do likewise acknowledge, that whereas there are different Sentiments among *Christians* concerning some of these Points; and some of the contending Parties have so unfairly stated, and foully mis-represented the Opinions of their Opposers, in the Disguise of imaginary Consequences, or Consequences, at least, deny'd and abhorr'd by the Maintainers of the Opinions they oppose, as to give some Umbrage to this, startle weak Men, and prejudge them against *Religion*. This they do to expose their Adversaries, and fright others from the Reception of their Sentiments. For such I can make no Excuse. The Practice it self is scandalously Disingenuous, and can admit of no reasonable Vindication, and so fair an Occasion being given, I cannot pass it without a Remark. A notable Instance of this Sort I meet with in a Book, just now come to Hand. The ingenious Author of *the*

short

ſhort Method with the Deiſts, in a Letter directed to *Charles Gildon*, newly recover'd from *Deiſm*, cautions him againſt the *Diſſenters*; and to enforce his Caution, preſents him with ſuch an Account of their Opinions, as is indeed ſuited to fright the Reader.

He tells him that they maintain, "That God ſees "no Sin in the Elect, let them live never ſo wicked- "ly. They damn the far greateſt Part of the World, "by irreverſible Decrees of Reprobation, and ſay; "That their good Works are hateful to God; and that it is not poſ- "ſibly in their Power to be ſav'd, let them believe as they will, and "live never ſo religeouſly: They take away free Will in Man, and "make him a perfect Machine. They make God the Author of Sin, "to creat Men on purpoſe to damn them; ------ They make his "Promiſes and Threatnings to be of no Effect, nay, to be a *Sort* of "burleſquing, and inſulting thoſe whom he has made miſerable, "which is an hideous Blaſphemy. But to what Purpoſe is all this ſaid? 1. Did not the Writer know, That this is not a Repreſentation at all of the Opinions maintain'd by the *Diſſenters*, but of the Conſequences tack'd to them by their Adverſaries? Does he not know, That they deteſte and abhor *theſe Poſitions* as much as he does, That they refuſe theſe to be Conſequences of them? Is it then candid to offer that as their Opinions, which they abhor, and which they will not allow to follow upon their Opinion? Again 2. Doth not this Gentleman know that the *Principles* to which he has tack'd *theſe Conſequences*, are the *very Doctrines*, taught in the *Articles of the Church of England*, unanimouſly maintain'd by all the great Men of that Church, till Bp. *Lawd* his Days; which were preach'd by them in the Pulpit, taught in the Schools, and upon all Occaſions avouch'd as the Doctrine of the *Church of England*; and, as ſuch, to this very Day are own'd by no inconſiderable Number of that Church? With what Juſtice then or Ingenuity can he call this the *Doctrine* of the *Diſſenters*? 3. From whom does he expect Credit to this diſingenuous Account of the *Diſſenters* Opinion? Such as know them, will believe nothing upon the Reading of this Paſſage; but that *the Writer* either underſtood not the Opinions he undertook to repeſent, or that againſt his Light, he miſrepreſented them, and ſo is never to be credited again, without good Proof, in any Thing he ſays of them. 4. Was it the Author's Deſign to gain a Proſylite to the oppoſite Opinions? This I believe was it. But this is the moſt unlucky Way of Management in the World; for if his Diſciple is a Man of Senſe, he will be ſhy of believ-

Letter ſubjoin'd to the Deiſts *Manual*, P. 22, 33.

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ing that such monstruous Opinions can be receiv'd by a *Body of Men*, among whom, there must be own'd by their worst Enemies, to be not a few learn'd and sober. and if he find himself abus'd upon Search, may he not be tempted, not only to reject this Account, but all that he receiv'd upon the same Authority? When Persons of Sense, who have been abus'd, are undeceiv'd, they are wont ever after to incline to favourable Thoughts of the Persons and Principles they were prejudg'd against; and to suspect that Cause of Weakness, which cannot be supported, but by such mean and unmanly Shifts, as this of misrepresenting the opposite Opinion. 5. If the adverse Party shall take the same Course, what a fine Work shall we have? and to speak modestly, they want not a colourable Pretence for a Retortion. But who shall be the Gainers? Neither of the contending Parties surely: For Men will never be beat from their Opinions by Calumnies that they know to be unjust. None will gain, save they, who are lying at the Catch, for Pretences to countenance them in the Rejection of the *Christian Religion*. It's none of my Business to debate this Controversie with this Author.

If he has any Thing new to advance upon these Heads, let him advance it, he will find *Antagonists* in the *Church of England*, able perhaps to tope with him, tho the *Dissenters* should fail: This Gentleman had manag'd his Opposition with more modesty and Ingenuity, if he had attentively perus'd the learn'd Bp. of *Sarum his Discourse* on the 17*th Article* of the *Church of England*. But I hope this Author, upon second Thoughts, when his Passion is over, will be asham'd of what he has writ.

But now to return to *Herbert* and the *Deists*, If we abstract from these two Abuses, and consider the *Doctrines of Christianity* as represented in the *Scriptures*, or according to them, there is no Ground to charge them with any Thing frightful, or of ill Consequence to *Religion*. Yea I dare be so bold as to say, That if *practical Religion* consisting in *Godliness*, *Righteousness* and *Sobriety*, is any where to be found in the World, it is to be found amongst those, as readily as any where else, and in as eminent a Degree, who have been train'd up in the Belief, and under the Influence of those very Doctrines, which some, and particularly *Herbert* would perswade us to be so horrid, as to fright Men at once out of their *Wits* and *Religion*. If it be said, That this is not owing to the *Influence* of *these Principles*. I answer, This, at least, proves *those Principles* not inconsistent with *practical Religion*, in as much as they, who believe them, are eminent in it; and, if we enquire of them, what has influenc'd their

their Walk, they are ready to attest, That the *Belief* of these very Truths has had the *principal Influence* upon that Effect; and to offer a rational Account of the Tendency of these Doctrines to promote *practical Religion*.

Now, we have wip'd off the insinuated Reproach, design'd by our Author, against the *Christian Religion*. Let us next consider what there is in this Plea. He tells us, *His Religion* consists of *incontroverted Articles*, and so will fright no Body. But 1. This is not true in Fact, as we have demonstrate above. *His Articles* have been *controverted*. The *Sufficiency* of them has been *believ'd* by *very few*. Again 2. Will our Author say, That nothing is *necessary*, to *Religion*, which is *controverted*? Will the *Deists* undertake this Point? If so, their *Religion* is *lost*, as is evident from what has been demonstrated above. 3. This no more proves our Author's *five Articles* to be a *sufficient Religion*, than it proves *one* of them alone to be *such*. He who owns no more in *Religion*, but this only, *There is a God*, may as well plead, That *Religion* retains only what is incontrovertible. But the *Deists* will say, There are other Points *necessary*. Well does not this give me an Answer to their Argument, when I say, There are other Points necessary besides their *five Articles*. 4. Whereas he would bear us in hand, That no Man will scruple his *Religion*, is not this enough to make any reasonable Man shy of admitting it, that its Author and Inventer dare not say *positively*, That it's *sufficient* to answer the Purpose, for which it is design'd, and that others undertake to demonstrate, That if it is trusted to, it will prove a Soul-ruining Cheat? In a Word, it's not worth the While to calculate a *Religion* for those, who will admit nothing in *Religion*, but what is *incontroverted*: For, in short, they are for *no Religion*. And I think we have in particular evicted, That our Author's *five Articles* will be too hard in Digestion for such delicate Stomachs.

IV. Our Author tells us, He embrac'd this *Catholick Religion*, *Quod Concordia communis Substructionem agat*, *&c.* That is in short, let all the World agree to the *Sufficiency* of our Author's *five Articles*, and leave all other Things to be rejected or receiv'd, as Trifles, not necessary to be disputed about, and then there is an End of all the Contests, then there's a Foundation laid for everlasting Peace, and the Golden Age will be retriv'd, *Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia Regna.*

This Trifle deserves rather Pity than an Answer. What, will all the World agree that this *Religion* is *sufficient*, while its Inventer durst not say so?

V. He

V. He embrac'd it, " Quod Authoritatem Majestatemq; indubiam " Religioni, et *Hierarchiæ* inde *Politiæque* conciliat, &c. That is, *because it conciliates Respect to Religion, to the Ecclesiastical* Hierarchy *and civil Government. Religion* will be respected, when it requires nothing but what is *necessary. Church* and *State* will be respected when it punishes nothing but Transgressions against *incontroverted Articles.*

But is not this to trifle with a Witness? The Weakness of this Plea is so obvious, that I may well spare my pains in exposing it. Will it maintain the *Dignity* of *Religion* to confine it to a *Number of Articles*, which for any Thing we know, or the *Deists* know, may cheat us of our *Reward* in the End, since they cannot positively assure us of its *Sufficiency*, and we are positively sure it is not *sufficient*? Will it maintain the *Honour* of *Church Officers*, to admit a *Religion*, which subverts the very Foundation of all Respect to them, *viz.* The *divine Institution* of their Order? As for the Advantage of it to the *civil Government*, the *Deists* may offer it to the Consideration of the next Parliament, and they will consider whether it is proper to conciliate Respect to the *civil Government.*

VI. Our Author embrac'd his *Religion*, " Quod adeo non moliat Religi- " onem, ut ejus Severitatem Stimulum addat. That is, *It is so from favouring Liberty in Sin, that it urges harder to Vertue*, severe Vertue, *than Reveal'd Religion.* There is no Hope of Pardon here upon the Satisfaction of another. Men must work for their Life, and when they fail, they must satisfy by their *Repentance.*

Well, but do they, who teach the *Necessity* of *Satisfaction*, exclude *Repentance*? And if they make both *Satisfaction* and *Repentance* absolutely *necessary*, tho' each in its own Order and Place, to *Forgiveness*, methinks they will yet have the Advantage in Point of *Severity.* Again, but what if *Repentance* will not satisfy? If this is so, and our Author seclude all other *Satisfaction*, will not his *Religion* lead Men rather to *Despair* than *Vertue.*

VII. Our Author's last Inducement was, *Quod sacrarum Literarum Fini ultimo Intentioniq; quadret*, &c. *That is*, " Because this *catholick Religion* " answers the ultimate Design of the Scriptures. All the Doctrines " taught there level at the Establishment of these *five catholick Verities* " as we have oft hinted; there is " *Sacrament*, *Rite* or *Ceremony*, there " enjoyn'd, but what aims (or seems to aim) at the Establishment of " these *five Articles.*

But is not this a notable Jest. Our Author wou'd bear us in Hand, That

That his *Religion* answers the *great End* of the *Scriptures*, better than that *Religion*, which the *Scriptures* themselves teach. If our Author says not this, he says nothing. If the End of the *Scriptures* is not *good*, it is not for the Honour of our Author's *Religion* that it agrees with it: If it is *good*, and the *Religion* taught in the *Scriptures* themselves, answer their own Design best, why then, I would chuse *that Religion*, and leave our Author to enjoy his own: If he says, *His* answers it better, then I would desire to know where the Complement lies, that he design'd to the *Scriptures*. But I desire to know further of the *Deists*, Whether do the *Scriptures* teach any Thing besides *these Articles*, to be necessary? Where do the *Scriptures* tell that these are *sufficient*? Are *divine Institutions*, *Sacraments*, *&c.* necessary toward the Compassing of the Ends of *Religion*? If they are not, how does it commend our Author's *Religion*, that it quadrates with the Design of these Institutions? If they are necessary and useful, this *catholick Religion* is at a Loss that wants them. I am sensible our Author has caution'd against this, when he tells us, That they either do, or seem to aim at this. I see *old Birds are not caught with Chaff*. Now I found it. This *catholick Religion*, will really serve the Purpose, that *reveal'd Truths*, and *Institutions* do only seem to aim at. But after all, this is but *Say* and not *Proof*. And I will undertake to evict against all the *Deists* under Heaven, That the Confinement of *Religion* to these *five Articles*, as taught by the *Light of Nature*, is not only not *compliant* with the *principal Intendment* of the *Scriptures*, but inconsistent with it.

Thus I have considered the Inducements which led *Herbert* to imbrace this *catholick Religion*, and found them wanting. And I must say, If this noble Author had not been straitned by a bad Cause, that's not capable of a rational Defence, his Learning, which was very considerable, cou'd not but have afforded him better Pleas. *Charles Blount*, in the Close of his *Religio Laici*, tells us, It was for the same Reasons he imbrac'd *Deism*, and copies after *Herbert* with some little Variety. What he has, that our Author has taken no Notice of, in this Place, will occur in the *next Chapte*, where they are again repeated under another Form. *Men that have little to say have need to husband it well, and make all the Improvement of it they can.*

CHAP. XX.

Wherein the Queries offer'd by Herbert *and* Blount, *for proving the* Sufficiency *of their* five Articles *are examin'd.*

THE learn'd *Herbert* in an *Appendix* to his *Religio Laici*, moves some Objections against himself, but fearing after he has said all he can, some may remain unsatisfied still, he betakes himself to another Course, and essays to dispute his Opposers into a Compliance with his Sentiments by *Queries*. Of this Sort he proposes *seven*. *Charles Blount* concludes his *Religio Laici* in the same Method, with this Difference, That he has added other *seven Queries*, making in all *fourteen*, and prefix'd this Title, *Queries proving the Validity of the five Articles.*

The Arguments couch'd in these *Queries*, in so far as they tend to evict the *Sufficiency* of this *catholick Religion*, are not new, but materially the same, which we have formerly consider'd. The Method is indeed different, more subtile, and better suited to their great Design. Direct Proofs are less deceiving, and their Weakness is more easily discoverable by vulgar Capacities. *Queries* conceal the *Weakness* of Arguments, intangle, perplex and amuse less attentive Minds; and by them, the subtile Asserters of a bad Cause ease themselves of the Trouble of proving their ill grounded Assertions, which yet, by all Rules of Disputing, belongs to them only, and turn it over upon the *Defender*. This is enough as to the Method, to let us see how suitable it was to their Purpose.

The *Queries* propos'd by *Blount* are the same with *Herbert*'s, and he adds others which *Herbert* wants. Wherefore we shall consider them as propos'd by Mr. *Blount*. But whereas some of them are to more Advantage urg'd by *Herbert*, we shall offer these in *Herbert*'s Words, that we may overlook nothing, which has the least Appearance of Force in this Cause.

Query I. "Whether there can be any other true God, or whether "any

" any other can juſtly be call'd *Optimus Maximus*, the " *greateſt* and *beſt God*, and *common Father* of Man- " kind, ſave *He* who exerciſes *univerſal Providence*, " and looks ſo far to the Good of all Men, as to provide " them in common and ſufficient or effectual Means for obtaining " the State of *eternal Happineſs* after this Life, whereof he has im- " planted a Deſire in their Minds? If the Laick or Vulgar worſhip " any other God, who does not exerciſe this *univerſal Providence*, " are they not guilty of falſe Worſhip or Idolatrie? and if any one " deny this *common Providence*, is he not guilty of *Treaſon* againſt " the *Divine Majeſty*, and of a Contempt of his *Good-* " *neſs*, yea, and of *Atheiſm* it ſelf? Thus *Herbert*. Blount " *Blount* propoſes the ſame Query, but more ſhortly " thus, Whether there be any *true God*, but he that " uſeth *univerſal Providence* concerning the *Means* of coming to " him?

Herbert's *Relig. Laici*, *Appen. P.* 1, 2.

Rel. Laici, *P.* 90.

The Deſign of this *Query* is to prove the *Neceſſity* of a *catholick Religion*, or a *ſufficient Religion* common to all Mankind, and to fix the black Note of *Atheiſm* upon all who deny it. The Argument whereby this is evinced, is the very ſame, which we have examin'd above, as the *Deiſts* firſt and great Argument. What is added concerning *univerſal Providence*, we did conſider in our Anſwer to *Herbert*'s firſt inducement to *Deiſm*. And ſo we might intirely paſs this *Query* as anſwer'd already, were it not for the ſeeming Advantage given to it by this new Dreſs, wherein it appears.

This *Query* has a direct Tendency to drive Men into *Atheiſm*, and tempt them to lay aſide all *Worſhip* for Fear of falling into *Idolatry*. It is in it ſelf evident, That if God has given all Mankind, or to every Man *Means ſufficient* and *effectual* to lead them to *eternal Happineſs*, they muſt know of it, or, at leaſt, there muſt be eaſy Acceſs for them to know it: With what Propriety of Speech can it be ſaid, That the Means leading to *eternal Happineſs*, are given to every Man to be by him us'd for that End, if they know them not, or, at leaſt, if the Knowledge of them be not eaſily acceſſible to all, who will apply themſelves to an Enquiry after them? nor is it leſs evident, That the *Suitableneſs*, *Efficacy* and *Sufficiency* of theſe *Means*, for reaching this *End*, muſt be ſufficiently intimated to them. If it is not ſo, how can Men rationally be oblidg'd to uſe *Means* which they do not know to be proper for compaſſing the *End*? With what Courage or Confidence can any rational Man with great

Application, over many Difficulties, use, and all his Life continue in the Use of *Means*, concerning which he has no Assurance, That they will put him in Possession of the *End*? After all his Pains he may miss the *End* he had in View. How can any reasonable Soul please it self in such a Course? Can it be reasonably thought worthy of the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of God to give Man the *Means* of attaining *eternal Happiness* and *Means sufficient*, and yet leave Men in the Dark as to the *Knowledge* of this, That they are design'd for, and sufficient to reach the *End* for which they were given? What can rationally induce Men in this Case, to give God the Praise of his *Goodness*, in affording them these *Means*, or to use them for that *End*, for which they were given, if this is hid from them? It is then evident, That, if God has afforded all Men *sufficient Means* of reaching *eternal Happiness*, they must know this, or, at least, have easy Access to know these *Means*, what they are, and what they are design'd to, proper for, and will prove effectual to this *End*. And consequently, if Men find not such *Means* after Search, they have evidently Reason to conclude, That God has left them without them, at least, that they want them in their present Circumstances; since after all their Inquiries they cannot find them, nor can they discover that any *Means*, they know of, will be effectual to reach this *End*.

This is evidently the Condition of Man at present, left to the *meer Light of Nature*. We have prov'd just now, That if God had given these *sufficient Means*, every Man must, at least, upon Application, have had Access to know them, and to know that they are *sufficient*.

But, upon Application, they find no such Matter, and therefore have Reason to suspect, That God has not given them these *Means*, if not positively to conclude that they are without them. *Herbert* himself glories that he was the *first* who found out what these *Means* were. They had escap'd the Knowledge and Industry of the most Learn'd and Diligent before his Time. And if so, certainly the Vulgar behoov'd to be at a Loss about them. When he has found them, he dare not be positive about their *Sufficiency*: "Quam "etiam ob Causam, neque ea sufficere (ad Salutem, "*viz.* æternam) protenus dixerim, says he. Yea, he more than insinuates, That we cannot come to be positively assur'd of their *Sufficiency*, and so must remain in the Dark, since the Determination of this depends upon the Sentiments of God, which are known to none, as he says. Now when a Man so learn'd, so diligent, and so

Herbert *de Rel. Gent. P.* 217.

so evidently prepossess'd with a strong Inclination to favour any Means that had a *Shew* of *Sufficiency*, found so much Difficulty to hit upon any such, and did so evidently hesitate about the *Sufficiency* of these he had found; must not the *Laicks*, for whom, upon all Occasions, he pretends so much Concern, hesitate more? Yea, have they not Reason evidently to conclude, That there are no such Means provided for them?

But *Herbert* here teaches them, That none is to be acknowledg'd the *true God*, nor worshipp'd *as such*, who has not provided every Man in *effectual* and *sufficient Means* for attaining *eternal Happiness*. Well, may the *Laicks* say, " I neither know, nor can I ever be satisfied, That I have " *such Means*; yea, I have the greatest Reason to think that I want them; " if the *good God* had given them, he would not have mock'd me, by con- " cealing them, and so precluding me from the Use of them; he would " have pointed me to them, and intimated their *Sufficiency*, so as to make " it *knowable* to me, upon Application, without which he could never ex- " pect that I should use them: I have therefore Reason to conclude my " self destitute of them, and so I will worship no God, since there is " none that has provided me in the *Means necessary* to *eternal Happiness*: " For if I should, I would be guilty of worshipping *one*, who is an *Idol*, and " not the *true God*. Here we see where this Gentleman's Principles must inevitably lead the *poor Laick*, either to *direct Atheism*, or to worship one, whom he has Reason vehemently to suspect to be *meerly an Idol*, and not the true God.

Having thus discover'd the dangerous Tendency of *this Query*, I shall now give a direct Answer to it. And to it I say, That *the GOD*, who makes Man, implants in his Child's Mind a Desire of *eternal Felicity*, intimates to him that he is made for this *End*, obliges him, in Duty, to pursue this *End*, under a Penalty, in Case he fail of it; and yet denies or leaves his Child without the Means that are *absolutely necessary* for compassing it, antecedently to any Fault upon the Child's Part, will scarce obtain the Titles of *Optimus Maximus*, *Great* and *Good*, or of a *common Father*.

But the God, who made Man perfect, in his *original State*, and put him in the full Possession of all the *Means*, that were *necessary* to obtain *that End*, whatever it was, for which he was made, and which he was in Duty oblig'd to pursue, loses not his Interest in, and unquestionable Right to the Title of *Optimus Maximus*, *Great* and *Good*; nor does he cease to be a *common Father*, and to act the Part of such an one, if, when his Children contrary to their Duty, have rebell'd against him,

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by their own Fault dropp'd the Knowledge of the *End*, for which they were made, lost the Knowledge of the *Means*, whereby it is to be obtain'd, put themselves out of a Capacity of using the *Means*, or reaching the *End*, if, I say, in this case, he leave them to smart under the Effects of their own Sin, and treat them no more as *Children*, but as *Rebels*, who can blame him? Does he not act every Way as it becomes one, who by the best of Titles is not meerly a *Father*, but the *Soveraign Ruler* and *Governour* of all his Creatures, to whom of Right it belongs to *render a just Recompence of Reward* to every Transgressor?

Now, this is the Case, as we have already proven. If the *Deists* will make their Argument conclude, they must prove, That this is not the Case with Man. And when we see this done, we shall then know what to say. Till then, we are not much concern'd with their *Query*. If they say, *How can this be*? Can Men by the *Light of Nature* know how this came to pass? I answer, That's not the Question, how it came to be so; but whether, in Fact, it be so? That it really is thus, is before proven. The *Heathens* have confess'd it. And tho' we should never come to be satisfied, how it came about, yet that it really is so is *enough* to *acquit* God.

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Nor is God's *universal Providence* hereby everted, he still governs all Mankind suitably to their Condition. He rules those, whom of his soveraign and undeserved Grace, he has seen meet to deal with, in Order to return to his Family, in a way of *infinite Mercy* and *Grace*. He governs the rest of the World, whom in his *Soveraign* and *Adorable Justice* and *Wisdom*, he hath left to ly under the dismal *Consequences* of their own Sin, in a Way becoming their State. He provides them in all Things, that do necessarily belong to the *Ends*, for which they are spar'd. Further, he leaves himself *not without a Witness* as to his *Goodness in that he does good, gives them Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling their Hearts with Food and Gladness*. Which is *Sufficient* to shew his *Super-abundant Goodness*, that reaches even *to the unthankful and evil*, and gives them Ground to conclude, That their Want of what is further necessary, flowes not from any Defect of *Goodness* on his Part; but from their own *Sins*, of many of which their own Consciences do admonish them. If God vouchsafe the *Means* of Recovery to any, they have Reason to be thankful to *Soveraign Grace*. If God give not, what he may justly refuse, who can in Justice complain of him? They must leave *their Complaint* upon themselves and acquit God. And

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while Man is continu'd in *Being*, it will still remain his indispensible Duty to worship this God, who made him, spares him, notwithstanding of his Sins, for a Time, punishes him less than his Iniquities deserve, and confers many other undeserv'd Favours on him. Nor is he guilty of *worshipping an Idol* in doing so.

Thus we have answer'd this *Query*: And I might now propose to the *Deists* a *Counter-query*, Whether they, who make that necessary to the Support of the *universal Providence* of God, his *Goodness*, and consequently his *Being*, of which no Man can be sure that it *really* is, which all Men have Reason to believe is not, and which most Men, who have made it their Business to consider the Case seriously, do firmly believe not to be in *Being*, may not reasonably be suspected to design the Overthrow of *these Attributes* of God, and consequently of his very *Being?* Thus *Vaninus* endeavour'd to establish *Atheism*: he ascribes *such Attributes* to God, and endeavour'd to fix such Notions of his *Perfections*, as could not be admitted, without the Overthrow of other *Perfections*, unquestionably belonging to him, or own'd in any Consistency with *Reason* and *Experience*. For he well knew, That if once he could bring Men to believe God to be *such an one*, if he was, they would be brought under a Necessity of denying, That there was *any GOD*.

Query II. *Whether these Means appear universally otherwise, than in our foresaid five catholick Articles?* *Blount* Rel. Laici P. 90. *Herb.* Rel. Laici, Append.

These Gentlemen think they have by their *first Query* sufficiently prov'd, That there must be a *catholick Religion*: Now they will prove theirs to be it. But I have overthrown the Foundation, and so the Superstructure falls. I have evinc'd, That there is no such *catholick sufficient Religion* by *Reason* and *Experience*. I have prov'd, That the Pretence of its being necessary to support the Notion of God's *Providence* and *Goodness*, can never possibly perswade any considerate Man, to believe against his *Reason* and *Experience*, against the Sight of his Eyes, and what he feels within himself, that he really is in Possession of a *sufficient Religion*, without *Revelation*; and consequently, that the urging of this Pretence can serve for nothing, if not to make Men question the *Goodness* and *Providence* of God, and so his very *Being*, to the Overthrow of *all Worship* and *Religion*. I have moreover made it appear, That these *five Articles* are not *catholick*, and tho' they were so, yet are not *sufficient*.

Query

Blount Rel. Laici P. 91. *Herb.* Rel. Laici, Appendix.

Query III. " *Whether any Thing can be added to* " *these* five Articles or Principles, *that may tend* " *to make a Man more* honest, vertuous, *or a* " better Man? *So* Blount. *To this* Query Herbert " *adjects a Clause*, viz. *Provided these* Articles *be well explain'd in their* " *full Latitude. And is not this the* principal End *of* Religion?

By the *foregoing Queries* the *Deists* think they have prov'd the *Necessity* of a *catholick Religion*, That their *five Articles* is this *catholick Religion*: By this *Query* they pretend to prove *their Religion sufficient.*

To this Purpose they tell us, That their *five Articles* are *sufficient* to make a Man *vertuous*, *honest* and *good*; That this is the *principal End* of *Religion*; and that nothing can be added to them, which can be any Way helpful as to this End. If by *making a Man vertuous*, *honest and good*, they mean no more, than the *Heathens* meant by these Words, who took them to intend no more, but an *Abstinence* from the *more gross outward Acts of Vice*, contrair to the *Light of Nature*, with some Regard in their Dealings among Men, to the common and known Rules of Righteousness, and Usefulness: If, I say, this is their Meaning, which I conceive it must be, then I deny that this is the *Principal End* of *Religion*. No Man that understands what *Religion* means, will say it. The *Heathens* were influenc'd to this by other Motives, than any Thing of Regard to the *Authority* of the *One true God*. Their *Ethicks*, which enjoin'd this *Goodness*, *Vertue* and *Honesty*, press'd it by Considerations of a quite different Nature. Of God his Legislature, his Laws are such they took little or no Notice, as we observ'd from Mr. *Lock* before; and therefore, whatever Usefulness among Men there was to be found in their Vertues, they had nothing of Religion, properly so called, in them.

But if by *making a Man honest*, *vertuous and good*, they mean the making of him inwardly holy, and engaging him in the whole of his Deportment, in both *outward* and *inward Acts*, to carry as becomes him, toward God, his Neighbour and himself, with a due Eye to the *Glory of God*, as his *End*, and a just Regard to the *Authority* of God, as the *formal Reason* of this Performance of Duty in *outward* and *inward Acts*: If, I say, they take their Words in this Sense, I do owne this to be one of the *principal Ends* of *Religion*. But then I deny that ever any Man, by their *five Articles*, as taught by the *Light of Nature*, or by any other of the like Kind, known only by the *meer Light of Nature*, was in this Sense, since the Entrance of Sin, made *vertuous* and *good*. Nay, the

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moral Heathens were not led to that Shadow of *Vertue* and *Goodneſs*, which they had, in the Senſe before mention'd, from any Regard to theſe *five Articles*, as they are *Articles* of *Religion*; that is, as they are *Principles* directive as to the Duty, which Man owes to the *One, only True and Supreme Being*.

And taking *Vertue*, *Goodneſs* and *Honeſty* in this-laſt Senſe, which is that alone, wherein we are concern'd, I have above proven the *Light of Nature*, and particularly theſe *five Articles*, as known by it, utterly *inſufficient* to make any Man *vertuous*, *honeſt* and *good*. And I have demonſtrated not *one*, but *many Things* beſide what is contain'd in theſe *five Articles*, however explain'd to the utmoſt Advantage that can be done by *meer unaſſiſted Reaſon*, to be *abſolutely neceſſary* to the *Ends of Religion*.

Nor will what *Herbert* has adjected mend the Matter, *viz. That his Articles muſt be well explain'd in their full Latitude*. Theſe Words, if they have any Senſe, it is this, it's not enough to believe and receive our Articles, as in general propos'd, this will make no Man *good*. He muſt not only, for Inſtance, agree to it, That there is *one ſupreme God*, and that he is to be *worſhipp'd* by a *vertuous Life*; but he muſt be acquaint with all the *Attributes* of *this God*, neceſſary to be known, in Order to the Direction of his Practice, and he muſt underſtand and be fix'd as to the Nature, Meaſure and all other neceſſary Concerns of theſe *Vertues* that belong to his Duty. This is undeniably the Meaning of this Expreſſion, and this inevitably overthrows all that our Author has been building. Were theſe *five Articles*, in this Latitude, *univerſally agreed to*? Our Author knew the contrary. If any Man ſhould aſſert it, it were enough to make him be hiſs'd off the Stage, as either brutiſhly ignorant of the World, or impudently diſingenuous. Well then, our *catholick Religion* is loſt. Again, ſince the Explications belong as much to our Author's *Religion* as the *Articles* themſelves, (for without them he confeſſes the *Articles* not *ſufficient*) how ſhall the *poor Laick* ever be ſatisfy'd about them? Have there not been as many, and as intricate Diſputes about them, as about the *Articles* of *Reveal'd Religion*? Where is now the *boaſted of Agreement?* Where is the *uncontroverted Religion?* What *Attribute* of God has not been queſtioned, diſputed and deny'd? Have not his *Creation* of all Things, his *Providence*, &c. which of all others have the moſt remarkable Influence upon Practice, by many been deny'd? Have not horrid Notions of them been advanc'd by ſome? What will now become of Men of ſqueemiſh Stomachs, that can ad-

mit of no *Religion*, but *one* that's smooth, and has no rugged Controversies in it? Why, *poor Gentlemen*, they must part with our Author's *Religion*, and so be, what they were before, *Men of no Religion*. Upon the whole we see that this *Query*, design'd to prove the *Deists Religion sufficient*, has proven it a *Chimera*.

Query IV. " Whether any Things that are added to these *five Principles* from the *Doctrine of Faith*, be not uncertain in their *Original?* So *Blount*. *Herbert* to this adds, That tho' God be *true*, yet the *Laicks* can never be certain about *Revelation*: For, says he, How do ye know that God spake these Words to the *Prophets*? How do ye know that they faithfully repeated or write what God spoke to them, and no more? How do ye know that Transcribers have perform'd their Part faithfully? How do ye know, That that *particular Revelation* made to a *particular Priest*, *Prophet* or *Lawgiver*, concerns not only all other *Priests* and *Lawgivers*, but also the *Laicks?* Especially how shall ye know this, if the Matter of *Revelation* require you to recede from *Reason*? Thus he. And here we have a Proof of the fourth *Reflection* of his unfair Treatment of the *Christian Revelation*, which we made above Chap. 13. For either he insinuates, That the *Scriptures* teach Things contrary to *Reason*; and if so, where was our Author's Ingenuity when he call'd it *optima Religio*, and upon other Occasions pretended so much Respect to it? Does not this justifie our Charge of *Disingenuity* against him, in the *first Reflection* we have made, in the Place now referr'd to? If he owns, That this is not the Fault of the *Christian Religion*, but of other *pretended Revelations*; then he justifies our *fourth Reflection*, wherein we charge him with *jumbling Revelations*, *true* and *false* together, that have, at least, seemingly fair Pretences, and these that have none, and deceitfully charges upon all *in Cumulo*, the Faults peculiar to the worst. If this is not enough to perswade you to the Truth of his Protestation above-mentioned, *viz.* That he design'd no Hurt to the *Christian Religion*, he has an Observation, with which he concludes this *Query*, that will beat the Perswasion of it into your Brains, or else of somewhat beside, and it is this in his own Words. " I think it worthy of the *Laicks* Obser- " vation, That there is this Difference betwixt " the *pretended Relevations* offer'd to us, by the " *Lawgivers*, and those offered to us by *Priests*, *Interpreters of the Oracles* " *of*

Blount Rel. Laici, P. 91.

Herbert Rel. Laici, Appendix, P. 3.

Herbert. Ibid.

" *of GOD*, (under which Notion he takes in all *Prophets*) whether they " gave their *Revelations* or *Responses* for Hire, or meerly to set off their " own Conceits (*sive venales sive nugivendi* ;) that the *Revelations*, which " the *Lawgivers* pretended they had from Heaven and promulgate as " such, did usually make the People more just and sociable, or agree " better together ; whereas the *pretended Revelations* of the *Priests* and " *Prophets*, of what ever Sort (or in his own Words *Oraculorum Inter-* " *pretibus sive venalibus sive nugivendis*) did usually make the People " more *unjust* or *impious*, and did divide them among themselves.

Here is a rare Observation, worth Gold to the *Laick*. He may, with more Safety, receive and use the *Laws*, which *Lycurgus*, *Solon* and the other *Heathen Lawgivers* pretended they had from Heaven ; and I would add *Moses* to his Writings, but that I fear our Author has cast him, because he set up for an *Interpreter* of God's Mind, and, upon some extraordinary Occasions, acted the Part of a *Priest* : Our Author, I say, will perswade him, That he may, with more advantage, read these Writings, than those of the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, or any other of the *sacred Writers*, who were not *Lawgivers*. 'Tis true, both are to be look'd upon, but as *pretended Revelations*, and so in Effect, *Cheats* : but the *Lawgivers* beguil'd the People to their Advantage: Whereas these Rogues for *Priests*, and others who join'd with them, Offer'd Cheats that were hurtful to Justice among Men, and the Peace of Society.

If any say, I am wresting our Author's Words, and that certainly his Comparison respects only the *Heathen Lawgivers* and *Heathen Priests*, I Answer, If this is the Meaning, it is altogether impertinent to the Design of the *Query*, which avowedly aims at this, That *Laicks* living among us (for I don't believe our Author design'd to send his Book to the *Pagans*) can never be satisfi'd as to the *Truth* of any *particular Revelation*, and all his subordinate *Queries* do directly thrust at the *Scriptures* ; and then he closes with this Observation, as of the greatest Moment to the Intendment of the *Query*. And therefore I cannot own, That I have done any Injury to our Author, in the Interpretation I have given of it ; but I have spoke his Meaning more plainly, than he thought it convenient to do. The *next Query* is to the same Purpose, and therefore we shall propose it, and Answer both.

Query V. Supposing the *Originals* true, whether yet they be not uncertain in their Explications, " so that unless a Man read all Authors, speak with all learn'd Men, and know all " Languages, it be not impossible to come to a clear Solution of all Doubts?

Blount Rel. *Laici* ubi supra, P. 91.

Thus *Blount. Herbert*, in his *fifth Query*, speaks to the same Purpose, he makes a huge Outcry about the *Schisms* and *Sects* that are among us, and tells us plainly, That if we will adhere stiffly to *Revelation*, we must of necessity, get an *infallible Judge*, to whose Decisions we must submit in all Things. He endeavours to prove that the *Scriptures* will not decide the Controversie; and impertinently enough labours to disprove what none ever asserted, That *Miracles* wrought by the Writers will not decide the Differences about the Meaning of their Writings. For its evident this *Query* only respects the *Meaning* of the *Revelation*, as the *former* did its *Original*. However, I know who will thank our Author, for asserting the Necessity of a living *infalible Judge*. If any think I have wrong'd our Author as to this, let them inspect his Book, and they will find I have done him Justice. But for the Satisfaction of those who have it not, I shall subjoin his own expres Words; he informs the *Laick*, That he can never be satisfied about the *Meaning* of this *Revelation*, about which there are so many Controversies, unless either he can "Linguas cunctas edisere, Scriptores cunctos celebriores perlegere, Doctiores etiam, qui non scripserunt, consulere; "aut aliquis saltem Controversiarum illarum ex Consensu communi "*summus constitueretur Judex*. And then he goes on to prove, That there is no other possible Way of deciding these Differences, and coming to the *Meaning* of *Revelation*; but on these *two Ways*, pointed at, in the Words now quoted. The *first* is rediculous, and therefore we must be *Deists* or *Papists*.

The Design of these *Queries* is obvious. They were afraid that their Arguments might prove weak, which they had advanc'd for the *Sufficiency* of their *catholick Religion*; and now, in Effect, they tell the *Laicks*, That if they have a Mind to have a *Religion* at all, they must close with this, which the *Deists* present them. And tho' we cannot satisfie you, may the *Deists* say, in all Points, about our *catholick Religion*; yet you must rest satisfied with it: For you can never be sure about *Revelation*, either as to its *Original* or *Meaning*. Men brought to such a Strait, since they cannot have such a Religion as they would wish, must take such as they can get.

These *Queries* directly attack *Revelation*; and so belong not to our Subject. The learn'd Defenders of *Reveal'd Religion* have consider'd those Trifles, and repell'd the Force of them. I shall only consider them, in so far as they belong to our Subject, and offer the few following Animadversions upon them.

1. I say, If the *Laick* must, for the Sake of those Difficulties, quit

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Reveal'd Religion; he muſt part with the *Deiſts catholick Religion*, upon the ſame Account. *Herbert* has told us, and it were indeed rediculous to ſay the Contrary, That this *catholick Religion* is comprehenſive not only of their *five Articles*, but their *Explications*. Now, are there not as many, and no leſs intricate Debates about this *Religion*, than about that which is *reveal'd*, is not its *Sufficiency* diſputed? Muſt not the *Laick* read all Books, converſe with all learn'd Men, *&c.* before he can reſt ſatisfied in it? Are there not intricate and perplext diſputes about the *Authority*, *Extent*, *Uſe*, *Matter* and *Manner* of the Promulgation of the *Law of Nature?* Where ſhall the *Laick* find the *Notices* that belong to this *Religion*? Shall he turn inward, and find them inſcrib'd upon his own Mind? So our Author adviſes. But as learn'd Men ſay, and pretend to prove the Contrary. And if moſt *Laicks* look into their own Mind, they will either ſay, with the Latter, That they are not there; or complain that they are become ſo dim, that they cannot read them, unleſs ſome charitable *Deiſt* will afford them his Spectacles. But when they have got them, what ſhall they do next for the *Explications*? Are the *Explications* written there too? The *Deiſts* dare not ſay it. But theſe likewiſe are neceſſary, ſay the *Deiſts*, as we have heard from *Blount* and *Herbert* before. Shall the Laicks conſult the *Doctors* about their Meaning? But *do not Doctors differ*? Do not the *Magi*, and not a few learn'd *Greeks*, as *Zeno* and *Chryſippus*, *&c.* teach *Sodomy* to be *lawful*? Was it not the Judgment of others, That a wiſe Man ought καὶ κλέψειν τε καὶ μοιχεύειν, καὶ ἱεροσυλήσειν ἐν καιρῷ, μηδὲν γὰρ τέτων φύσει αἰσχρὸν εἶναι; That is, *To ſteal and commit Adultery and Sacrilege upon Occaſions, for none of theſe Things are by Nature, evil.* So *Theodorus* as *Heſychius Illuſtrius* reports in his Life. Do not *Ariſtippus* and *Carneades*, with many others, overthrow the *whole Law of Nature*, telling us, That nothing is naturally *juſt* or *unjuſt*, *good or evil*, but by Vertue of ſome *arbitrary Law*? Has not the ſame Opinion been reviv'd, broach'd and inculcated by *Hobbs* and others among our ſelves? Has not *Plato* long ſince obſerv'd in his *Phedon*, "That if any one "name either Silver or Iron, preſently all Men agree what it is that is "intended; but if they ſpeak of that which is *juſt* or *good*, preſently "we are at Variance with others, and among our ſelves. In a Word, He that will caſt at *Revelation*, for its Controverſies, is a Fool to go over to *Natural Religion*, in Expectation to be free of Controverſy. Thus we are at leaſt upon a Level with the *Deiſts*.

Dr. Owen *on the Sabbath Exercit.* 3. §. 13.

2. If

2. If the *Laick*, in Defiance of the *Deists Queries*, may reach a satisfying Assurance of the *divine Authority* of the *Scriptures*, where is then the Necessity for his quitting *Revelation*? It will quite evanish. This, I say, he may have, without troubling his Head about impertinent Queries of this Sort, if he duly attend to that one, plain and rational Direction given by our LORD *Jo.* 7. 17. *If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.*

The *Scriptures* containing a full Account of all the Concerns of the *Christian Religion*, are exhibited to him, and put in his Hand by the *Church* as a *Revelation* from God, wherein all his Concerns for Eternity are wrapp'd up. I do not plead, That the *Testimony* of the *Church* is a *sufficient Ground* for bottoming his *Faith*. But this I say, That the *Testimony* of the *Church* is a *sufficient Ground* for any Man to *judge* and *conclude firmly*, That its *Pretensions* are not *contemptible*, and that it deserves the most *serious Consideration* imaginable. But when I speak of the *Church*, whose Testimony this Regard is to be payed to, we set aside, as of no Consideration, a Multitude of Persons, whether of the *Clergy* or *Laick*, who do, in their Practice visibly contradict the *confess'd Rules* of their *Religion*. Such Persons are scarce to be reckon'd of any *Religion*, and their Testimony is of no Consideration, either for or against *Religion*. Nor do we restrict the Notion of the Church to the *Representatives* of it, much less to the *Church of Rome*, that monopolize this *Name*. But I take it for that *Body of Men*, of whatever Station or Quality, who have receiv'd, and do act answerably to the *Christian Religion* they profess, in some good Measure at least. Now I say, The *Testimony* of *this Church*, or *Body of Men*, deserves great Regard in this Matter. If we consider them, there are among them Persons of unattainted Reputation, *Enemies themselves being Judges*. Not a few of them are of unquestionable Judgment, deep Decerning, solid Learning, and strict Enquiries after *Truth*. They are not a few but many. Nor are they confin'd to one Nation or Age, but such there have been, in all Ages, in all Nations, where *Christianity* has obtain'd free Access. Many of them are Persons, whom Envy it self can't alledge byass'd, by external Gain of one Sort or of another. They are Persons of different, nay cross civil Interests, and of different outward Conditions. such are the Persons who give this Testimony. Again, If we consider their Testimony, they bear Witness to the *Christian Religion* in all its Concerns, its *Truth*, Sufficiency, Usefulness to all the Ends of *Religion*, with Respect to *Time* and *Eternity*, & its

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Efficacy for beginning, carrying on, maintaining, reviving and conſummating ſuch as ſincerely receive it, in *Godlineſs* towards God, *Righteouſneſs* towards Men, *Sobriety* with Reſpect to our ſelves; and that both as to *inward Principles* and *outward Acts*. Further, if we conſider in *what Way* they give in their Teſtimony, the Weight of it will appear. They bear Witneſs to all this, not only by their *Words*, but by their *Deeds*, living in a Conformity to it, parting with all that's deareſt to them for it, cheerfully undergoing the greateſt Hardſhips, patiently undergoing the moſt cruel Torments, to the Loſs of Life it ſelf; and this they do neither upon meer Conſtraint, nor on the other Hand, from a raſh and inadvertent Neglect of a due Regard to the unqueſtionable Advantage of Peace, Health, Life, and the other good Things they part with; but they venture upon *doing* and *ſuffering* freely and of Choice, upon a ſober, rational Conſideration of the Advantage of cleaving to their *Religion*, and of its being ſuch, as will do more than compenſate any Loſs they can ſuſtain for it. Again, they bear Witneſs to the Concerns of this *Religion*, as to a Thing, that they have not receiv'd upon bare *Hear-ſay*, but upon *narrow Scrutiny*, as that whereof they have the Experience. They do not only give this Teſtimony, when it's new to them, but after long Trial, when they are moſt ſedate and compos'd, when they can expect nothing of Advantage by it, and when they muſt lay their Account with Contempt, Oppoſition and Loſs. They give this Teſtimony in whatever Place they are, where it's honour'd, or where it's oppos'd. They give it with the greateſt Concern, and recommend this *Religion* to thoſe whom they wou'd leaſt deceive, even with their dying Breath, when they dare not diſſemble, and that after a long Trial, in the Courſe of their Lives, in the greateſt Variety of outward Condition, ſufficient to have diſcover'd the Weakneſs of their *Religion*, if it had any. They have made Choice of this *Religion*, and adher'd to it, under the greateſt outward Diſadvantages, who were not prepoſſeſs'd in its Favours, by Education, but prejudg'd againſt it; and they have imbrac'd it, where they had a free Choice to accept or reject it, and Advantages to tempt them to a Refuſal. They do not enquire an *explicite Belief*, as *Machometans* do, but provoke to Experience and Trial. Now I dare boldly ſay, That this Teſtimony is a better, more plain, obvious and every Way, more juſtifiable Ground of *rational Aſſent* to the *divine Authority*, *Truth*, *Efficacy*, and *Sufficiency* of the *Chriſtian Religion*, than can be given for the like Aſſent, to any other *particular Religion* whatſoever. Nay, there is more, in this one Teſtimony, as it is, or, at leaſt, may

may be qualified with other Circumstances, discernible even by the most ordinary *Laick*, here for Brevitie's Sake omitted, (the urging of this in its full Strength, not being my present Design) than can be offer'd for all the other *Religions* in the World, *Natural*, or pretending to *Revelation*, were all that can be said for them altogether put in one Argument. Any reasonable Man cannot but think his eternal Concern safer in following this *Society*, than any other whatsoever: There is not such another Company elsewhere to be met with, as might be demonstrated to the Conviction of the stiffest Opposer. But this I plead not at present. I say not, That the *Laick* should build his Perswasion of *Christianity* upon this *Testimony*. All that I make of it is this, That the *Laick* has Reason to consider the *Scriptures* as thus attested, as a Book, that has, at least, very plausible Pretences to *Divinity*, a Book that deserves a serious Perusal, a Book that cannot possibly have any obvious and unquestionable Arguments of Imposture, and consequently, that it deserves to be read through, and fully hear'd before it is cast, and that tho' there occur in it some Things, he cannot presently understand, or whose Use and Value he cannot take up, he ought not therefore to be prejudg'd against the *divine Authority* of the Book upon the Account of them, till, at least, it is heard to an End. For, who knows not that Things, which appear incredible, unreasonable, yea rediculous, before their Causes, Order and Design are understood, may, upon Acquaintance with these, appear convincingly credible, useful and every Way reasonable? This is all I claim of the *Laick* at present, and he deserves not the Name of reasonable Man who will deny it upon such a Ground. And if the *Deists* had consider'd this, we had not been troubl'd with the many childish and trifling Prejudices, wherewith their *Oracles of Reason* and other Books are stuffed. Nor could they have been diverted from the serious Consideartion of the Scriptures, by such pitiful Exceptions.

Well, the *Scriptures* being put into the *Laicks* Hand, thus attested, he sets himself to the Perusal of them, and such a Perusal as the Case requires, looking to God for Direction, he tries the Means appointed by them, for Satisfaction as to their *Divinity*, while he is seeking Light from God, in such a Matter he dare not expect it; if he continue in the Neglect of *known Duty*, or the Commission of *known Sin*, and therefore he studies to avoid them. He is resolv'd to follow *Truth*, as it's discover'd, and to subscribe to the Scripture Pretensions, if they give *sufficient Evidence* of themselves. Nothing is here resolved, but what is reasonable

reasonable beyond Exception. In Pursuance of this just Resolution, he reads them, and upon his Perusal, what Passages he cannot understand, or reach the Reason of, he passes at present and goes on, till he see further what may be the Intendment of them. And he finds in plain and convincing Expressions his own Case, and the Case of all Men by Nature, clearly discover'd, and urg'd upon him by this Book; the Words pierce his Soul, dive into his Conscience, and make manifest the *Secrets of his Heart*, known to none but God, manifest his *Sins*, in their *Nature* and *Tendency*, and all their Concernments. His Conscience tells him *All this is true* to a Title, tho' he did not know it before, and none other, save the Heart-searching God, could know what was transacted within his Heart, tho' overlook'd by himself. The Discovery not only carries with it an Evidence of Truth, which his Conscience subscribes to; but the Words wherein it is expressed, bear in themselves upon his Soul with a *Light*, *Authority* and *Majesty* formerly unknown, evidencing their Meaning and Truth, and filling the Soul with unusual and awful Impressions of the *Majesty* and *Authority* of the Speaker. Thus being convinc'd and judg'd, and the *Secrets of his Heart made manifest*, he is forc'd to *fall down and acknowledge*, *That God is* in the Word *of a truth*. And he is ready to say, *Come see a Book that told me all that ever I did* in my Life, *is not this* the Book of God? Thus he stands trembling under the Sense of the Wrath of God, due to him for his Sins. He reads on, and finds in the same Book a Discovery of *Relief*, propos'd frequently in plain Passages. He is urg'd to an Acceptance of it. The Discovery carries along with it a full Evidence of the *Suitableness*, *Excellency* and *Advantage* of the Remedy: And by a Gust of its Goodness, or inward Sense, he is drawn to an Approbation. Upon this Approbation the promis'd Effects follow. His Fears are dissipate, his Hopes reviv'd, his Soul is made acquaint with formerly unknown and God becoming Expressions of the Nature and Excellencies of God, and going still on, every Day repeated Experience occur of the Justness of the Discoveries the Word makes of himself, the *Authority* of its *Commands*, *Faithfulness* of its *Promises* the *Awfulness* of its *Threatnings*: none of which fall to the Ground. He, in a Word, has repeated Experience of the *unparallel'd Efficacy* of the whole, for the Cure of his *Darkness* his *Corruption*, &c. which despis'd other Applications; and towards his Advancement to a sincere and conscientious Regard to all his Duties, *outward* and *inward*, toward *God* and *Man*.

Let us now but suppose this to be the Case with the *Laick*, upon his Perusal of the *Scriptures*, tho' with Respect to innumerable Souls, it's more than a bare Supposition: upon this Supposition I say, 1. The *Laick* has the *highest Security* he can desire, That this Book is, as to its Substance, the *very Word of God*, as certainly as if it were spoken to him immediately by a Voice from Heaven. This cannot well be deny'd by any that understands this Supposition. 2. *I* say, The *Laick* thus *convinc'd* may laugh at all *Herbert*'s Queries as impertinent. He finds God speaking by the Word, and owning it for his. He needs not therefore trouble himself who wrote it, or whether they were honest Men who transcrib'd it, or whether they perform'd their Part, whether it was design'd for him; and the like may be said of all his other *Queries*. He will find no Occasion for that Distinction betwixt *Traditional* or *Original Revelation* mention'd by *Herbert*, and in-

Lock's *Essay of hum. Understand. Book* 4. *Cap.* 18. §. 6, 7, 8.

sisted upon by Mr. *Lock*, on what Design I leave others to judge. In this Case, as to the Substance it is all one to him, as if it had not come through another Hand, nor has he Reason to jealous, That God would permit to creep into, or stand in a Book, which for the Substance, he still owns and evinces to be from him, any Thing of a coarser Alloy, at least any such *Corruption* as might make it unworthy of him to own it, or unsafe to use it to the Design it was given for: Yea, he has the strongest Security that the *Perfections* and *Providence* of God can afford, to rest fully assur'd of the Contrary. He has no Reason to be stumbled at Passages he cannot understand, or such as by others are reckoned ridiculous, but rather to say with *Socrates* in another Case, *What I understand I admire, and am fully convinc'd to be every Way worthy of its Author; and therefore I conclude what I understand not, to be equally excellent, and that it would appear so if I understood all its Concerns.* finally, This Supposition takes off all Pretence of Hesitation about the *Meaning* of the *Scriptures*, as to what the *Laick* is particularly concern'd in. The Story of the *Necessity* of an *infallible Judge*, is built upon this Supposition, That the *Scriptures* are so obscure in Matters necessarly relating to the *Faith* and *Practice* of the *Vulgar*, that they cannot be understood by them satisfyingly, in the Use of appointed Means: This Supposition is palpably false, contrair to *Scripture*, *Reason* and *Experience*, as is evinc'd by our Writers against the *Papists*, who fully consider their Pleas, and particularly those, which *Herbert* and the *Deists* have borrowed from them, who may be consulted by the Reader.

3. Thus far I have made appear, That the *Laick* has the justest Reason in the World to look upon it as his Duty, or the *Will of God*, That he should give the *Scriptures* such a Perusal. 2. That *in doing his Will* there is a Way, at least, supposable, wherein he may reach full Satisfaction in his own Mind, in Defiance of the *Deists Queries* about the *Divinity* of the *Scriptures*, and reach the highest *rational Security*, even that of *Faith*, bottom'd upon *divine Testimony*, and *inward Sense* or *Experience*; which *Herbert* himself, upon all Occasions, truly asserts to be the *highest Certainty*. I shall now advance one Step further, and assert, That this is more than a meer Supposition, that it is Matter of Fact, That they, who do receive the *Scriptures* in a due Manner, especially among the *Laicks* or Illiterate, do find and rest upon this Ground in their Perswasion. Upon this Ground it was alone, that Multitudes did at first receive it, and for it reject the *Religions* they were bred in; and not as the *Deists* imagine, upon a blind Veneration to *Teachers*, *Priests* or *Preachers*, whom, by Education, they were taught to Abhor: And upon this Ground they still do adhere to it, and receive it as written in the *Scriptures*. The Words of Mr. *Baxter*, as I find them quoted by Mr. *Wilson* (for I have not seen *Baxter*'s Book in Answer to *Herbert de Veritate*) are remarkable to this Purpose, "I think, says he, That in the very Hearing or Reading, Gods Spirit often "so concurreth as that the *Will* it self shou'd be touch'd with "an internal Gust or Savour of the *Goodness* contain'd in the "Doctrine, and at the same Time the *Understanding* with "an internal Irradiation, which breeds such a sudden Ap "pre-

Baxter's *Animad. on Herbert de Verit. P.* 135. *quoted by M.*]. Wilson *Scriptures interpreter asserted, Appen. P.* 20.

" prehension of the *Verity* of it, as Nature gives Men of natural Principles. " And I am perswaded, That this increas'd by more Experience and " Love, and inward Gusts, doth hold most Christians faster to Christ, " than naked Reasonings could do. And were it not for this, unlearn'd, " ignorant Persons were still in Danger of Apostasy, by every subtile " Caviller that assaultes them. And I believe that all true Christians have " this Kind of internal knowledge, from the *Suitableness* of the *Truth* and *Good-* " *ness* of the *Gospel* to their new quickn'd, illuminated, sanctify'd Souls. The Apostle tells us, *God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shin'd into our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ.* If the *Deist* say, How proves the *Laick* this to me? I answer, That is not the Question. For the Design of the *Deists* in these *Queries*, is to prove, That the *Laick* cannot be assur'd about the *Original* and *Meaning* of *Revelation* in his own Mind, and so must close with their *catholick Religion*. Now in direct Contradiction to this, I say, here is a Ground to stand upon. And if he has this Ground, even a sober *Deist* must allow he has no Reason to be mov'd from it, but must fully *know that the Doctrines are of God*. And so I have overthrown the Design of the *Query*. As for the *Deists* Question, how he proves it to others, it is impertinent. It is not reasonable to expect, That every common Man can stop the Mouths of Gain-sayers. It is enough for him, if he can give a Reason, which is good, and must be own'd such in it self. If the *Deist* question Matter of Fact, that he finds Matters so and so; I answer, A blind Man may question whether I see this Paper now before me; and yet I have good Reason to believe it is there, tho' I should fail of convincing him.

If the *Deist* say, I have perused the *Scriptures*, and found no such Effect; I answer, In Matters of Experience *one Affirmative* proves more than twenty *Negatives*; unless the Application is in all Respects equal, and the Effect depend upon a necessary Cause: For where a voluntary Agent is the Cause of the Effect, there it does not always necessarly follow upon the like Application. But to wave this General, which would require more Room to explain, than I can allow it in this Place. I say further to the Complainer, Have you given the *Scriptures such a Perusal*, as I have prov'd in a Way of Duty, your are oblig'd to do? Have you us'd the *Means*, in so far, at least, as is possible for you? Have you sought, have you waited for God's *Guidance* and *Preservation* from *Mistake*, and from *unjust Prejudices* against *him*, his *Works*, his *Word*, if this be such, and his *Ways*? Do you carefully study to avoid what may reasonably be thought, even by a considerate *Heathen*, to obstruct the Grant of the Assistance desir'd from God? Do you carefully avoid known Sin? Do you endeavour the Performance of what you know to be Duty? Are you resolved to follow in Practice where Light leads? If you dare not frankly answer, you have no Reason to complain. For my own Part, I am perswaded, That in Fact, none who *have done his Will* even thus far, have Reason to table a Complaint against the *Word*. Others who take a quite contrary Course, are unreasonable in the Complaint. Disputes about what *might be* the Case, upon Supposition of a Person's doing all, that in his present Circumstances he is able to do, and yet miss of Satisfaction as to the divine Authority of the Word; until the Subject of this Question be *found*, I think not my self concern'd in,

at least in a Controversy with the *Deists*. It's unreasonable to question the *Scriptures Authority* or the *Evidence* of it, upon Suppositions that never were in *Being*, and I am perswaded, never shall have a *Being*.

But these Things I leave. This Dispute lies wholly out of our Road. But I have been oblig'd to this Digression, in Pur uit of the *Deists* impertinent *Queries*. I say, *impertinent*, because, were all granted that's aim'd at in these Queries, it will not avail one Rush, towards the Proof of the Point the *Deists* are on, *viz. the Validity of their Religion*: For were *Reveal'd Religion uncertain*, is it a good Consequence, that therefore the *Deists Religion* is *certain*? What I have said in Defence of *reveal'd Religion*, I would have to be look'd upon only as a *Digression*, and not as a full *Declaration of my Opinion*; much less wou'd *I* have this understood as the Substance of what can be pleaded on Behalf of that *bless'd Book* that has *brought Life and Immortality to Light*. This is not the hundredth Part of what even I could say, were this my Subject. And others have said, and can plead much more than *I* am able. However, this I ow'd to the *Truth of God*. Such as would see all these Pretences against *Revelation*, repell'd, are desired to consult those, who design'dly treat of this Subject.

There are other Things in these *Queries* now animadverted upon, that deserve rather Contempt than an Answer. In particular it's suppos'd, as *one* of the *principal Foundations* of those *two Queries*, now under Consideration, That a Man cannot reach Certainty in his own Mind upon solid Grounds, and rationally acquiesce in it as such, unless *he knows all that can be said against it, read all Books, converse with all learn'd Men*, &c. than which there is not a more extravagant Expression in *Bevis* and *Garragantua*. Admit it, and I shall demonstrate against any that will undertake it that *nothing is certain*. I cannot but admire that so learn'd a Person as *Herbert* cou'd use such an extravagant Supposition. But what will not a bad Cause drive a Man upon? This confirms what is ordinarly observ'd, that there is no Opinion, however unreasonable, but has some learn'd Man for its *Patron*, if not *Inventer*.

We shall now go on to the rest of the *Queries* which will be of more easy Dispatch. That *I* have dwelt so long upon these two, is out of a *Regard* to *Revelation* and its Honour, and not from any *Weight* in the *Queries*. As for them, this alone had been a sufficient Answer, which *I* shall propose in Way of a Counter-query, and conclude with it; *If a* Laick *that's illiterate cannot be satisfied as to the* Truth *of* Reveal'd Religion, *how doeth this prove the* Deists five Articles *to be a* sufficient and good Religion *?*

Blount *Rel. Laici, P.* 91, 92.

" Query VI. " Supposing all true in their *Originals*, and in " their *Explications*, *whether yet they be so good for the instructing* " *of Mankind, that bring Pardon of Sin upon such easy Terms, as* " *to believe the Business is done to our Hand? And*,

Query VII. " *Whether this Doctrin doth not derogate from Vertue and Goodness*, " *while our best Actions are represented as imperfect and sinful, and that it is impos-* " *sible to keep the ten Commandments, so as God will accept of our Actions, doing the* " *best we can?* Thus *Blount* gives us *Herbert's sixth Query* in *two*. There is no material Defence in *Herbert* save only that he harps upon the old String, and spends himself in bitter Invectives against the *Scripture Doctrine* about the *Decrees* of God

God, of which we have ſaid enough before. And therefore I think it needleſs to burden this Paper with his Words.

The *two former Queries* ſtruck at *Scripture Revelation* it ſelf, theſe two ſtrike at the *Matter* contain'd in the *Scriptures*. And here there is a double Charge laid againſt the *Doctrine* reveal'd in the *Scriptures*, as *black* as Hell can invent, and as *falſe* as its *black*. The *ſixth Query* Charges it with *favouring Sin*, by bringing *Pardon* upon *too eaſie Terms*: And the *ſeventh* charges it with *derogating* from *Vertue*.

For an Anſwer to both, I might oppone *Experience*. *Sin* is no where by any ſo oppoſ'd, *Vertue* no where ſo *ſincerely cultivated*, as among thoſe, who ſincerely receive the *Doctrine* of *Satisfaction*, and believe the utmoſt as to the *Inabillity* of Man in his *preſent fallen Caſe*, without *ſupernatural Aſſiſtance*, and *gracious Acceptance* to pleaſe God. Dare the *Deiſts* compare with them in this Reſpect? If they ſhould, I know what would be the Iſſue, if the Judge had Conſcience or Honeſty. A *Socrates*, *Seneca* or *Plato* deſerves not to be nam'd in the ſame Day with the meaneſt ſerious *Chriſtian*, that believes *theſe Doctrines*, either with Reſpect to *Piety* toward God or *Duty* toward Man.

But as to the *firſt Charge*, I ſay the Ground of it is *Falſe*: the *Query* is diſingenuous and deceitful. The Ground of it is a Suppoſition, that *Revelation* excludes the *Neceſſity* of *Repentance*. This is manifeſtly falſe: both *Herbert* and *Blount* knew it to be falſe; and I could not but do ſo, if ever they read the Bible. And the *Query* comparing *Revelation* upon this known Miſ-repreſentation, with *natural Religion*, is ſhamefully diſingenuous. Let the *Query* be, Whether it is more favourable to *Sin*, to ſay, It is not to be *pardon'd* without *Satisfaction* to *Juſtice* by Chriſt, and *Repentance* upon our Part, as *Revelation* teaches; or, that upon our *Repentance meerly* God is *oblig'd* to *pardon* it, as the *Deiſts* ſay? Now I leave it to the *Deiſts* to Anſwer this.

As to the *ſecond Charge*, *Relevation* derogates nothing from *Vertue*. It teaches indeed that our beſt Actions are imperfect, and he knows not what *Perfection means*, or what is requir'd thereto, that will deny it. It teaches that *they who are in the Fleſh cannot pleaſe God*. It talks at another Rate than *Herbert* of the Condition of *ſinful Man*, as to Acceptance with God. He gives him a Direction, "Cum Bonum pro virili præſtas, Herb. *de Veritate*, P. 108. "Mercedem a Bonitate illa ſuprema pete, exige, habe; "quo Pacto revera ſapies. That is, *manfully perform your Duty as you can* (and what ever Sin remain) *ask*, *demand*, and *have your Reward*; *This is the Way to be truly Wiſe*. This petulant Advice the *Scripture* doth not juſtifie, and *ſober Reaſon* reprobates. Where Sin interveens, whatever the Sinner do, in Way of Obedience, I conceive it will be as good Wiſdom as our Author teaches him to be very ſober, with his *Exiges* or *Demands*. But to return. *Revelation*, by teaching Man's *Inability*, doth not hinder him from *Vertue*; but takes him off from his own *Strength*, which would fail him in the Performance, and leads him where he may get *Strength*, and where innumerable Perſons have got *Strength* to perform Duty acceptably; and it points to the only Ground, whereon ſinful and imperfect Obedience can be *accepted* with, or expect a *Reward* from God.

Query VIII. "Whether ſpeaking good Words, think- *Blount* Rel. Laici, P. 92.
"ing good Thoughts, and doing good Actions be not

" the just Exercise of a Man's Life? or that without imbracing the foresaid " *five Principles* or *Fundamentals*, it be impossible to keep Peace among " Men, that God may be well serv'd? Thus *Blount*. This is *Herbert's seventh* and *last Query*, and he only adds one Clause to it, wanting here; " Whether the *Laick* may " not spend his Time better in those Exercises mention'd, " than if he imploy'd it in deciding Controversies, he does not understand?

Herb. Rel. Laici, Appen.

The supposd Necessity for the *Laick's* perplexing himself with Controversies, at which *Herbert* here aims, in Case he see meet to imbrace *Revelation*, we have above weighed and cast. But as to the *Query* it self, it is utterly impertinent. For this is the Question they should have propos'd, *Whether their Religion is sufficient to bring a Man to these just Exercises, and to maintain Peace in Society?* And not as they propose it, *Whether these Exercises be in themselves good*, which no Body denys? Let this be the *Question*, and we Answer *negatively*. For this we have given sufficient Reasons above.

Query IX. " *Whether the foresaid* five Principles *do not* " *best agree with the Precepts given in the ten Com-* " *mandments, and with the two Precepts of Jesus Christ*, " viz. *To love God above all, and our Neighbour as our* " *selves? as well as with the Words of St.* Peter, *That in every Nation he that fear-* " *eth God, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted of God?*

Blount Rel. Laici. P. 92, 93.

This *Query* is the same with *Herbert's seventh* and *last Perswasive* to *Deism*, which we have answer'd above. It's falsly suppos'd that *Revelation* teaches, That the Knowledge of the *ten Commands*, or *Christ's Summary* of them, is *sufficient* to *Salvation*. Yea, *Revelation* teaches expresly, That no Man can practise them without *Grace* from Christ, and that there is no other *Way* of *Salvation* but by *Faith* in him. Again, It is falsly suppos'd, That the Agreement of *these Articles* with (that is to say their not contradicting) these Commands, proves them a *sufficient Religion*. This Argument, if it proves any Thing, it proves too much; for it will prove any *one* of them alone to be *sufficient*. If the *Deists* mean, That their *five Articles*, not only are not *inconsistent* with, but *sufficient* to bring Men the Length required by the *ten Commands*, *our Lord's Summary of them*, or *to fear God and work Righteousness*, as *Cornelius* did, I Answer *negatively* to the Question, They can bring no Man to this. *Cornelius*, of whom *Peter* speaks, had imbrac'd the *old Testament Revelation*. What *Peter* speaks of Men *of all Nations being accepted with God*, relates to the Discovery God had made to him of his Design to admit Men *of all Nations* promiscuously to *Acceptance* with him through the *Gospel Revelation*: And consequently, That the Opinion hitherto receiv'd by *Peter* and other *Jews*, of the continu'd Confinement of *Reveal'd Religion* to *Israel* and its Privileges, was a Mistake. So that this Place helps not the *Deists*, if it is not cut off from its Scope and Cohesion, or interpreted without Respect to it. This Way of Interpretation of Scripture is not safe. I know not where Mr. *Blount* learn'd it. But I can tell him where there is a Precedent of it, *Matt.* 4. And if the *Deists* have a Mind to follow that Precedent, they shall not be followed by me.

He means Satans mangling the Scriptures in his citations of them.

Query X. " *Whether the Doctrine of* Faith *can by* human Reason *be suppos'd or granted to be* infallible, *unless*

" *leſs we are infallibly aſſur'd, That theſe who teach this Doctrine do know the* " *ſecret Counſels of God?*

To this I Anſwer, That I am ſufficiently ſecured as to the *infallible Certainty* of the Doctrine, if I have received the *Scriptures* upon the Ground above-mention'd, without ſuppoſing any who now teach it, to have any further Acquaintance with the *ſecret Counſels* of God, than the *Word* gives them.

Query XI. " *Whether all Things in the Scriptures (be-* " *ſides the moral Part which agrees with our five Prin-* *Blount* Rel. Laici, P. 93. " *ciples*) *ſuch as* Prophecy, Miracles *and* Revelations *de-* " *pending on the Hiſtory, may not be ſo far examin'd, as to be made appear by what* " *Authority they are or may be receiv'd?*

I Anſwer, *Revelation*, in all its Parts, is capable to ſtand the *Teſt* of the ſtricteſt Trial, provided it be juſt, and manag'd as becomes. But I muſt tell the *Deiſts* one Thing in their Ear, That, if the *Scriptures* once evince themſelves to be from God, by *ſufficient Evidence*, that they are oblig'd, upon their Peril, to receive all that it teaches, tho' they cannot prove it by *Reaſon*; nay, nor explain it. But what if any *Reveal'd Doctrine* be contrary to *Reaſon?* Upon the foregoing Suppoſition, this *Query* cannot be excuſed of *Blaſphemy*, but is highly impertinent and unreaſonable.

Query XII. " *Whether in* humane Reaſon *any one may*, " *or ought to be convinced by* one ſingle Teſtimony, *ſo far* *Blount* Rel. Laici, P. 94. " *as to believe Things contrary to, or beſides Reaſon?*

One ſingle Teſtimony is writ in a different Character in the *Query*, perhaps to give us to underſtand, That by it is meant the *Teſtimony* of the *Revealer, God*. And it cannot reaſonably be underſtood of any other; for upon *no other ſingle Teſtimony* ſave that of *God*, is an Aſſent to *Revelation* demanded, or pleaded for, by thoſe he oppoſes.

This being premiſ'd, I ſay this *Query* conſiſts, and is made up of *three* as impious Suppoſitions as can enter the Thoughts of any of the Sons of Men; beſides that they are mutually deſtructive of one another. 1. It ſuppoſes that the *one ſingle Teſtimony of God* is not a *ſufficient Warrant* for believing whatever he ſhall reveal. 2. It ſuppoſes that a *Revelation* come from God may contain Things *really contradictory* to our *Reaſon*. 3. It ſuppoſes that the *ſingle Teſtimony of God* is not a *ſufficient Ground* to believe *Things that are beſides our Reaſon*, tho' they be not contrary to it, that is, *Truths*, which we cannot prove by *Reaſon*, or whereabout there are ſome Difficulties which we cannot ſolve. Take theſe *three impious Suppoſitions* out of the *Query*, and it has no Difficulty in it. If we ſuppoſe once a *Revelation* to be from God, we muſt lay aſide the *ſecond Suppoſition* as impoſſible, *viz.* That it can contain *any Thing really contrary to Reaſon*: Set aſide this, which makes the *Query Felo de ſe*, deſtroy it ſelf, and let the Queſtion be propos'd, Whether we may believe upon the *ſingle Teſtimony of God* whatever does not really contradict our *Reaſon*, tho' it contains ſome Difficulties, which we cannot ſolve? And then I ſay, It's impious to deny it.

Query XIII. And laſtly, " Whether if it were granted *Blount* Rel. Laici, P. 94. " they had *Revelations*, I am obliged to accept of ano-

" thers

" thers *Revelation* for the Ground of my *Faith*? Especially if it doth " any Way oppose these *five Articles* that are grounded upon the " *Law of Nature*, which is God's universal *magna Charta*, enacted by the *All-wise* " and *Supreme Being*, from the Beginning of the World, and therefore not to be " destroyed or altered by every whittling Proclamation of an *Enthusiast*.

This *Query* is of the same Alloy with the former. To it we Answer shortly, The *Christian Revelation*, in others we are not concern'd, exhibits Matters of universal concernment, upon Evidence of their *Divinity*, capable to satisfie those who now live, as well as those, to whom they were *originally* made; and so are impertinently call'd anothers *Revelation*. And we are oblig'd to receive it as the Ground of our *Faith*, and Rule of our *Practice* as much as they. The Supposition that is added, That it contains *Doctrines* or *Precepts* contrary to the *Law of Nature*, is impious and false. What he adds further about the whittling *Proclamations* of *Enthusiasts*, if it is not applied to the *Sacred Writers*, we are not concerned in it. If it is apply'd to them, *First*, It's false, That they taught any Thing contrary to the *Law of Nature*. *Secondly*, It's impious to call them, in Way of Contempt, *Enthusiasts*: or, at least, it's intolerably bold for any Man to call them such, before he has proven it, which he never did, nor shall all the *Deists* on Earth, be ever able to do. *Thirdly*, It was rude and unmannerly to treat them with so much Contempt, especially without Arguments proving the Charge, whom the whole Authority of the Land, all the Persons vested with it, and the Body of the People, respect as Men infallibly directed o. God. *Fourthly*, It was disingenuous to treat them thus, after such Pretensions as our Author had made of Respect to them, in this and his other Books.

Finally, Mr. *Blount*, instead of a *fourteenth Query*, concludes with the Testimony of *Justin Martyr*, as probative of his Point. His Words run thus, " Finally, submitting my Discourse to my impartial and judicious " Reader, I shall conclude with the saying of *Justin Martyr*, *Apol. cont. Triplon*, " P. 83. That all those who liv'd according to the *Rule of Reason*, were *Christians*, notwithstanding that they might have been accounted as *Atheists*, such " as among the *Greeks* were *Socrates*, *Heraclitus*, and the like, and among the " *Barbarians*, *Abraham* and *Azarias*: For all those who liv'd, or do now live, " according to the *Rule of Reason* are *Christians*, and in an assured quiet " Condition.

Blount Rel. Laici, P. 94, 95.

As to this Testimony of *Justin Martyr*, it is not probative with us, tho' we honour the *Fathers*, yet we do not think our selves oblig'd to submit to all their Dictates. This is said, but not proven by him, either by *Scripture* or *Reason*. And I fear not to say, 'Tis more than he or any other can prove. *Abraham* is impertinently class'd amongst those who wanted *Revelation*. *Socrates* & *Heraclitus*, in so far as they liv'd according to *Reason*, are assuredly praise-worthy, and upon this Account are not to be reckon'd *Atheists*. That they were *Christians* I flatly deny. Nor can it be proven from *Scripture* or *Reason That their Condition is assuredly quiet*. And further, than this I am not concern'd to pass any Judgment about their State at present: What it is *that Day will manifest*.

FINIS.

A N

ESSAY

CONCERNING THE

NATURE *of* FAITH,

Or, the GROUND upon which

FAITH

Assents to the

SCRIPTURES;

WHEREIN

The Opinion of the RATIONALISTS about it, is Propos'd and Examin'd, especially as it is stated by the Learn'd Mr. LOCK in his BOOK of HUMANE UNDERSTANDING.

By the same AUTHOR.

EDINBURGH,

Printed by the Heirs and Successors of *ANDREW ANDERSON*, 1714.

ESSAY

ON

NATURE & FAITH,

SHEWING

FAITH

AND

SCRIPTURE;

WITH

AN

CHAP. I.

Containing some general Remarks concerning Knowledge, Faith, *and particularly* Divine Faith, *and that both as to the* Faculty *and* Actings *thereof.*

ALL *Knowledge* is commonly, and that not unfitly referr'd to the *Understanding* or *intellective Power* of the Mind of Man, which is conversant about *Truth*. Our *Assent* to, or *Perswasion* of any *Truth* is founded either 1. upon the *immediate Perception* of the *Agreement* or *Disagreement* of our *Ideas*, and so is call'd *Intuitive Knowledge*. Or 2. It results from a Comparison of our *Ideas* with some intermediate ones, which helps us discern their *Agreement* or *Disagreement*; and this goes under the Name of *Rational Knowledge*. Or 3. It leans upon the Information of our *Senses*, and this is *Sensible Knowledge*. Or 4. It depends upon the *Testimony* of *credible Witnesses*. And this is *Faith*.

Faith again, if it is founded upon the Testimony of *Angels*, may be term'd *Angelical*; if on the Testimony of Men *Humane*; and if it is founded on the Testimony of God, it is call'd *Divine Faith*: It is of this last we design to discourse, as what particularly belongs to our present Purpose.

When We speak of *Divine Faith*, we either mean the *Faculty* or *Power* whereby we assent unto *Divine Testimony*; or the Assent given by that *Power*. Both are signify'd by that Name, and *Faith* is promiscuously us'd for the one or other.

Faith as it denotes the Faculty, Power or Ability of our Minds to perceive the Evidence of, and Assent to *Divine Testimony*, is again either *Natural* or *Supernatural*. That naturally we have a *Faculty* capable of assenting in some Sort to *divine Testimony*, is deny'd by none so far as I know. But that *Ability* whereby we are at least habitually

bitually fitted, disposʼd and enabled to assent in a due Manner to, and receive with just Regard the *Testimony* of God no Man by a Nature has. This is a *Supernatural Gift.*

Several Questions I know are movʼd concerning this *Ability.* It belongs not to my Subject, neither doth my Inclination lead me to dip much in them at present. I shall only suggest the few *Remarks* ensuing.

I. It seems unquestionably clear, that Man originally had a *Power, Ability* or *Faculty* capable of perceiving, discerning and assenting to *Divine Revelations* upon their proper Evidence: For it is plain, That God did reveal himself to Man in *Innocency,* and that he made Man capable of Converse with himself: But if such a *Faculty,* as this we speak of, had been wanting, he had neither been capable of those *Revelations,* nor fitted for Converse with God.

We cannot conceive how Reason *should be prejudicʼd by the Advancement of the* rational Faculties *of our Souls with Respect unto their Exercise toward their proper Objects*; which is all we assign unto the Work of the Holy Spirit in this Matter *Dr.* Owen *on the Spirit, Preface, Page* 9.

2. It may most convincingly be made out, That all our *Faculties* have suffer'd a dreadful Shock, and are mightily impair'd by the Entrance of *Sin* and *Corruption* of our Natures thereon ensuing; and particularly our *Understandings* are so far disabled, especially in Things pertaining unto God, that we cannot in a due Manner, perceive, discern or entertain *Divine Revelations* upon their proper Evidence, unto the Glory of God, and our own Advantage, unless our Natures are supernaturally renew'd. But this notwithstanding, the the Faculty of assenting to *Divine Testimony* is not quite lost, tho' it is impair'd and rendred unfit for performing it's proper Work in a due Manner. I know none who asserts, That any of our *Faculties* were intirely lost by the *Fall.* In *Renovation* our *Faculties* are renew'd, but there is no Word of implanting *new ones.* It is certain, unrenew'd Men, such as *Balaam,* and others have had *Revelations* made to them, and did assent to those *Revelations.* Nor is it less clear, *That the Devils believe and tremble.*

III. Whether Men, in a State of Nature, whose Minds are not Renew'd, may not so far discern and be affected by the *Characters and Evidences* of God impress upon *Divine Revelations,* particularly the *Scriptures,* where those Evidences shine brightly, as thereby to be oblig'd, and actually drawn to give some Sort of Assent into the *Testimony* of God:

God, I shall not positively determine: Tho' the Affirmative seems probable to me. The *Impress* of a *Deity* is no less evident on the *Scriptures* than his other *Works*. *He has magnify'd this Word above all his Name.* Besides, I do not see, how the very *Faculty it self* can be thought to remain, if it is not capable of discerning any Thing of God, where he gives the most full and convincing Evidence of himself, as unquestionably he doth in the *Scriptures*. Nor do I doubt but Multitudes of sober Persons, train'd up within the Church, and thereby drawn to a more attentive and less prejudicial Perusal of the *Scripture Revelation*, do, upon sundry Occasions, find their Minds affected with the Evidence of God in them, and thereby are drawn to assent to them as his Word, tho' not in a due Manner, and that even where they remain Strangers unto a Work of *Renovation*. And sure I am, if it is so, it will leave the Rejecters of the *Scripture* remarkably without Excuse.

IV. Whether some *transient Act* of the Spirit of God is always necessary upon the Mind, to draw forth even such an Assent, as that last mention'd, I shall not determine; that in some Cases it is so, is not to be doubted. The *Faith* of *temporary Believers* undoubtedly requires such an Action as its Cause, and where any Thing of this Evidence affects the Minds of Persons, at present deeply prejudicial, as they were, who were sent to apprehend Christ, and went away under a Conviction, *That never Man spake as* He *did*; there such a *transient Work* of the Spirit of God seems necessary to clear their Minds of Prejudices, and make them discern the Evidences of a *Deity*: But whether it is so in other Cases, I shall not conclude positively.

V. But were it granted, That *Faith*, that is the Faculty or Power of believing, which is nothing else save the Mind of Man considered as a Subject capable of assenting to *Testimony*, still remains; and that tho' wofully impair'd, weakn'd and disabled, it yet continues in so far able for its proper Office or Work, that either *by the Assistance of some transient Operation of Gods Spirit*, breaking in some Measure the Power of its Prejudices, and fixing it to the Consideration of its proper *Object*, or even without this upon a more sedate, sober, less prejudicial Observation it may, tho' less perfectly perceive the Impress and Evidences of God, appearing in the *Revelations* he makes of himself, and that thereon it may be actually so affected, as to give some Sort of Assent, and reach some Conviction, *That it is God who speaks*: Were, I say, all this granted, it it will amount to no great Matter; since it is certain, that every Sort of *Faith* or *Assent* to *Divine Testimony* is not sufficient to Answer our Duty,

obtain Acceptance with God, and turn to our Salvation. Nor is it so much of our Concernment to enquire after that Sort of *Faith*, which fails of answering these Ends, and therefore I shall dip no further into any Questions about any *Faith* of this Sort, or our *Ability* for it.

VI. It is more our Interest to understand what that *Faith* is, which God requires us to give to his *Word*, which he will accept of, and which therefore will turn to our Salvation; and whence we have the *Power* and *Ability* for this *Faith*. Of these Things therefore we shall discourse at more Length in the next Chapter design'd to that End.

CHAP. II.

Wherein the Nature of that Faith, *which in Duty we are obliged to give to the* Word *of God, our Obligation to, and our Ability for answering our Duty, are enquir'd into.*

WE have above insinuate, and of it self it is plain, That every Sort of *Faith* or *Assent* to *Divine Testimony* answers not our Duty, nor will amount to that Regard which we owe to the *Authority* and *Truth* of God, when he speaks, or writes his Mind to us. We must therefore in the first Place enquire into the Nature of that *Faith* which will do so. Nor is there any other Way wherein this may better be clear'd, than by attending to the plain Scripture Accounts of it.

Now if we look into the *Scriptures*, we find 1. The Apostle *Paul*, 1 *Thes.* 2. 13. when he is commending the *Thessalonians*, and blessing God on their Behalf, gives a clear Description of that *Faith* which is due unto the *Word* of God. " For this Cause also, *says he*, thank we " God without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God " which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the Word of Men: but " (as it is in Truth) the Word of God, which effectually worketh

" also

"also in you that believe. If we advert to this Description, we cannot but see these Things in it, *First*, That some special Sort of *Assent* is here intended. The *Thessalonians* did not think it enough to give such *Credit*, or yield such an *Assent* as is due to the *Word* of Men, even the best of Men. *Secondly*, In particular it is plain, That such an *Assent* is intended as some Way answers the unquestionable Firmness of the *Testimony* of the God of *Truth*, which is the Ground whereon it leans. *Thirdly*, It is obvious, That somewhat more is intended than a *meer Assent* of whatsoever Sort it is: The Words plainly import such an *Assent*, or *receiving with the Word of God* as is attended with that *Reverence*, *Submission of Soul*, *Resignation of Will*, *and Subjection of Conscience*, that is *due* to God. This the Use of the Word elsewhere in *Scripture* strongly pleads for, and the Manner wherein the Apostle expresses himself here is sufficient to convince any Man that no less is intended. Less than this would scarce have been a Ground for the Apostle's *Thanksgiving* to God, and for his doing this *without ceasing*. And indeed we find that this Expression elsewhere used imports not only People's *Assent* to, but their *Consent* and *Approbation* of the Word of God; yea, and their *embracing* in Practice the Gospel, *Act.* 8. 14. & 11. 1. 2. We are told *Heb.* 11. 1. That it is *the Evidence of Things not seen*. ελεγχος, which we render *Evidence*, signifies properly a *convincing Demonstration* standing firm against, and repelling the Force of contrary Objections: *Faith* then is such an *Assent* as this, It is a firm Conviction leaning upon the strongest Bottom, able to stand against, and withstand the strongest Objections. 3. The Apostle more particularly describes the Ground whereon it rests, or what that demonstrative Evidence is, whereon this Conviction is founded, and that both *negatively* and *positively*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 5. It stands not in the *Wisdom of Men*, but in *the Power of God*. That is, it neither leans upon the *Eloquence*, nor *Reasonings* of Men, but upon the *powerful Evidence* of the Spirit's Demonstration, as it is in the Verse before.

Having given this short and plain Account of *Faith* from the *Scripture*, we must in the next Place prove, That in Duty we are bound to receive the *Word* of God with a *Faith* of this Sort. Nor will this be found a Matter of any Difficulty; For

1. The *Scriptures* hold themselves forth to us as the *Oracles of God*, which *holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God*, and wrote by divine Inspiration, and *the Holy Ghost* is said *to speak to us by them*. Now the *very Light of Nature* teaches us, That when God utters *Oracles*, speaks and writes his Mind to us, we are in Duty bound, readily

to

to assent, give intire Credit to, and rely with the firmest Confidence on the *Veracity* of the Speaker; and further, we are obliged to attend to what is spoken with the deepest Veneration, Reverence and Subjection of Soul, and yield an unreserv'd practical Compliance with every Intimation of his Mind.

II. The Scriptures *were written* for this very End, *That we might so believe* them as to *have Life by them*, Joh. 20. 30, 31. And again Rom. 16. 25, 26. *The Scriptures of the Prophets according to the Commandment of the everlasting God*, are said *to be made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith.* Certainly then we are in Duty obliged to yield this *Obedience of Faith.*

III. The most dreadful Judgments, yea eternal Ruin, and that of the most intolerable Sort, are threatned against those, who do not thus receive the Words of God from his Servants, whether by Word or Writ, is no Matter. "Whosoever shall not receive you, *nor* hear "your Words, when ye depart out of that House or City, shake off the "Dust of your Feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolera-"ble for the Land of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* than for that City, *Mat.* 10. 14, 15. Accordingly we find the Apostles preach the Word at *Antioch* in *Pisidia*, *Act.* 13. Demand Acceptance of it both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and upon their Refusal they testifie against them in this Way of the Lord's Appointment, Verse 51. And all this Severity they used without offering Miracles or any other Proof for their Doctrine, so far as we can learn, besides the *authoritative Proposal* of it in the *Name* of GOD.

IV. We find the Apostle in the Words above quoted, commending the *Thessalonians* for *receiving* the Word in this Manner, which is Proof enough, That it was their Duty to do so.

This much being clear, it remains yet to be enquir'd, Whence we have *Power* or *Ability* for yielding such an *Assent*, whether it is *Natural* or *Supernatural*? Now if we consult the Scripture upon this Head, We find

I. That this *Ability*, to believe and receive the Things of God to our Salvation and his Glory, is expresly denyed to *unregenerated Man*, or *Man* in his *natural Estate* 2 Thes. 3. 2. *All Men have not Faith*: 1 Cor. 2. 14. "The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; "for they are foolishness unto him: Neither can he know them, be-"cause they are spiritually discerned, *Joh.* 8. 47----- Ye therefore hear "not God's Words, because ye are not of God.

II. This

II. This is expressly deny'd to be of our selves, and asserted to be a supernatural Gift of God, Eph. 2. 8. *By Grace are ye saved thro' Faith; and that not of your selves, it is the Gift of God.*

III. The Production of it is expressly ascrib'd unto God, He it is that *fulfils* in his People *the Work of Faith with Power*, 2 Thes. 1. 11. He it is that gives them, that is, that enables them, *on the behalf of Christ to believe and suffer for his Name*, Phil. 1. 29. It is one of *the Fruits of the Spirit*, Gal. 5. 22. And of it Christ is the *Author*, Heb. 12. 2. The further Proof and Vindication of this Truth I refer to *Polemical Writers*.

But here possibly some may enquire, How it can be our Duty thus to *believe* the *Scriptures*, since we are not of our selves able to do so? In Answer to this, I shall only say 1. The *very Light of Nature* shews, That it is our Duty to yield perfect Obedience, but yet certain it is, we are unable to answer to our Duty. 2. The *Scriptures* plainly require us to *serve God acceptably with Reverence and Godly Fear*, and with the same Breath tells us, we must *have Grace* to enable us to do it, Heb. 12. 28. 3. We have *destroyed* our selves, and by our own Fault impair'd the *Powers* God originally gave us, and brought our selves under innumerable Prejudices and other Evils, whereby the Entrance of Light is obstructed: But this cannot reasonably prejudge God's *Right* to demand *Credit* to his *Word*, on which he has impress sufficient *objective Evidence* of himself, which any one that has not this faultily lost his Eyes, may upon Attention discern. 4. It is therefore our Duty to justifie God, blame our Selves, and wait in the Way he has prescribed for that *Grace* which is necessary to *enable* us, and if thus we do his Will, or aim, at least, at it, we have no Reason to despair, but may expect in due Time to be enabled to understand and know, whether these Truths are of God, or they who spoke them did it of themselves, *Joh.* 7. 17. Tho' yet we cannot claim this as what is our due.

From what has hitherto been discoursed, it is evident, That this *Faith*, whereby we assent to the *Scripture*, is supernatural, or may be so called upon a twofold Account: Because the *Power* or *Ability* for it, is *supernaturally given*, and the *Evidence* whereon it rests is *supernatural*.

In this Chapter we have directly concerned our selves only in the Proof of the *first* of these, viz. *That our Ability thus to believe is supernaturally given*, and this has been the constant Doctrine of the Church of God, which we might confirm by Testimonies of all Sorts, did our designed Brevity allow.

See Mr. Wilson *his Scriptures genuine Interpreter asserted, Appendix, P.* 4, 5. &c.

But

But our *modern Rationalists* do resolutely oppose this. The Author of a late *Arbastical Pamphlet*, that truly subverts all *Religion*, may be allowed to speak for all the rest: for he says no more than what they do assent to: He tells us, "That when once the Mystery of Christ Jesus was "revealed, even humane Reason was able to "behold and confess it; not that Grace had al-"tered the Eye-sight of Reason, but that it had "drawn the Object nearer to it. *To the same Pur-pose speak the* Socinians; Schlichtingius *tells us*, "Man endued with Understanding is no other-"wise blind in Divine Mysteries, than as he who "hath Eyes, but sits in the Dark: remove the Darkness, and bring "him a Light, and he will see. The Eyes of a Man are his Under-"standing, the Light is Christ's Doctrine. To the same Purpose doth the paradoxical *Belgick Exercitator*, that sets up for *Philosophy* as the Interpreter of the *Scripture*, expres himself frequently. Nor is his prerended Answerer *Volzogius* differently minded; tho' he is not so *constant* to his Opinion, as the other.

Treatise of humane Reason, P. 58. publish'd 1974, and to the Credit of the Church of England with an Imprimatur, quoted by Mr. Wilson ubi supra, Pag. 13.

Wilson ibid. Pag. 7.

Ibid. Pag. 11.

But these Gentlemen may talk as they please, we are not oblig'd to believe them in this Matter, the *Scriptures* plainly teaching us, That our Minds are blind, our Understandings impair'd and obstructed in discerning the Evidence of Truth, by Prejudices arising from the Enmity of the Will, and Depravity of the Affections. Nor were it difficult to demonstrate from *Scripture*, That no Man can believe, or understand the Word of God aright, till 1. The Spirit of God repair this Defect of the *Faculty*, or *give us an Understanding*, 1 *Joh.* 5. 20. 2. Break the Power of that Enmity that rises up against the Truths of God as Foolishness. 3. Cure the Disorder of our Affections that blind our Minds. And 4. Fix our Minds, otherwise vain and unstable, to attend to what God speaks, and the Evidence he gives of himself. But this is not what we principally design, and therefore we shall insist no longer upon this Head: Our present Question is not about our *Ability* or *Power* to believe, but the Ground whereon we do believe. What has been spoken of the former hitherto, is only to prepare the Way for the Consideration of the latter, to which we now proceed.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Ground, or the formal Reason, whereon Faith assents to the Scriptures is enquired after, the Ration Ists *Opinion about it, and particularly as stated by Mr.* Lock *in his Book of* Humane Understanding *is proposed and considered.*

THo' we have spoken somewhat concerning our *Ability* to believe the Word of God, and the *supernatural Rise* thereof in the preceeding Chapter, wherein we have offer'd our Thoughts of that which goes under the Name of *Subjective Light*; yet this is not the Question mainly intended in these Papers. That which we aim more particularly to enquire after, is the Ground whereon the Mind thus subjectively enlightned, or by the Spirit of God disposed, fitted and enabled to discern and assent to *divine Revelations*, builds its *Assent*, and wherein it rests satisfied, or acquiesces.

The *Question* then before us is this, What is that *Ground*, whereon, or *Reason* which moves and determines us to receive the *Scriptures as the Word of God*? What is the *formal Reason* whereon our *Faith* rests, or what is the proper Answer to that Question, *Wherefore do ye believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and receive Truths therein propos'd as the Word of God and not of Man*?

It is in general own'd by all, who believe the *Scriptures* to be a *Divine Revelation*, that the *Authority*, *Truth* and *Veracity* of God, who is *Truth it self*, and can neither *deceive*, nor be *deceiv'd*, is the Ground whereon we *receive* and *assent* to *Propositions of Truth* therein *reveal'd*.

But this general Answer satisfies not the *Question*; For, tho' it is of natural and unquestionable Evidence, That God's *Testimony* is true, cannot but be so, and as such must be received; yet certain it is, That *Divine Testimony* abstractly consider'd cannot be the *Ground* of our *Assent* unto any *Truth* in particular: But that whereon we must *rest*, and whereon our *Faith* must *lean*, is, "the Testimony of God to it, evi-

" dencing it self, *or*, as it gives Evidence of it self unto the Mind. *The Knot of the Question then lies here*, What is that Evidence of God " his speaking or giving Testimony to Truths supernaturally reveal'd, " whereby the Mind is satisfied that God is the Revealer? Or when " God speaks, or intimates any Truth to us, how, or in what way " doth he evidence to us, That he is the Revealer, what Ground is it " whereon we are satisfied as to this precise Point?

Now whereas there are Persons of *three Sorts*, who may be call'd to *Assent* to *Divine Revelations*, the Question propos'd may be considered with Respect to each of them.

I. The Question may be mov'd concerning those Persons to whom the *Scripture Revelations* were *originally* made, and as to them it may be enquir'd, when God did reveal his Mind unto the *Prophets*, what was that *Evidence*, what were those τεκμηρια or *certain Signs*, whereby they were infallibly assured, That the Propositions they found impress'd upon their Minds, were from God?

II. As to the Persons to whom they did immediately reveal these *Truths*, it may be question'd, What *Evidences* they had to move them to *assent*, and give *Faith* to those *Truths* which were propos'd to them as *Divine Revelations*? On what *Ground* did they rest satisfied, That really they were so?

III. Whereas we, who now live, neither had these *Revelations* made to us *originally*, nor heard them from the Persons to whom they were so given; but being compriz'd and put together in the *Bible*, they are offer'd to us as a *Divine Revelation*, and we are in Duty, upon Pain of God's Displeasure in Case of Refusal, call'd and requir'd to believe, and *assent to* whatever is therein *reveal'd, as the Word of God and not of Man*; hereon it may be mov'd, What is that *Evidence* which *this Book* gives of it self, That it is of God, whereon our Minds may rest assur'd that really it is so?

As to the *Question*, in so far as it concerns the *first Sort* of *Persons* mention'd, we shall not dip much into it; all I shall say is in this in the Words of the judicious and learn'd *Doctor Owen*, " In the

Dr. Owen *of the Spirit, Book* 2. *Chap* 1. §. 10. *Page* 104.

" Inspirations of the Holy Spirit, and his Actings " of the Minds of holy Men of old, he gave them " infallible Assurance that it was himself alone by " whom they were acted, *Jer.* 23. 28. If any shall " ask by what τεκμηρια or infallible Tokens they might know assuredly " the Inspirations of the holy Spirit, and be satisfied with such a Per-

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"swasion as was not liable to Mistake, that they were not imposed "upon? I must say plainly, That I cannot tell; for these are Things "whereof we have no Experience.

There is one Thing dropt as to this Matter by the ingenious Mr. *Lock*, that deserves some Animadversion. Tho' he delivers nothing positively about those *Evidences* which the *Prophets* had, yet *negatively* he tells us, That the *Prophets* their Assurance did not at least *solely* arise from the *Revelations themselves*, or the *Operation of the Spirit impressing* them upon their Minds, which he calls the *internal Light of Assurance*: But that beside this to satisfie them fully, That *those Impressions* were from God, *external Signs* were requisite; and this he endeavours to prove from their desiring *confirmatory Signs*, as *Abraham* and others did; and from God, his giving *such Signs* undesir'd. To this Purpose his Appearance to *Moses* in the Bush, is by our Author taken notice of. As to the Opinion it self, I look on it as highly injurious to the Honour of *Divine Revelation*, and I take the Grounds whereon it is founded to be weak and inconcludent. For 1. Mr. *Lock*, nor any for him shall never be able to prove, That these divinely inspir'd Persons always required or got such *confirmatory Signs* extrinsical to the *Revelation* or *Inspiration it self*; yea, it is manifest, that for most part they neither sought them nor got them. 2. When they did seek or get them, Mr *Lock* cannot prove, That either God or they found them necessary for the *present Assurance* of the Persons own Minds, as if that *internal Light of Assurance*, to use Mr. *Lock*'s Words, had not of it self, *while it abode*, been *sufficient* to satisfie the Mind fully, That it was God who was dealing with it, or revealing himself to it. It is plain, That other Reasons of their desiring such Signs may be Assign'd. When the Matters reveal'd were Things at a Distance, which required some extraordinary Outgoings of God's Power to effectuate them, in that Case they desir'd, and God condescended to grant to them some such *extraordinary Signs*, not to *assure* them that God was *speaking* unto them, but to *strengthen their Convictions* of the *Sufficiency* of God's *Power*, for *enabling* to do what he *requir'd* of them if it was difficult, or *accomplishing* what he *promised* to them in Defiance of the greatest Opposition. Sometimes *Divine Revelations* were *Promises* of Things at a *Distance*, that were not to be actually accomplished till after a long Tract of Time, and over many intervenient Obstructions; in this Case they were oblig'd to believe these *Promises*, and wait in the Faith of them, even when that *Light*, that first assur'd

Of humane Understanding, Book 4. Chap. 19. §. 15. Pag. 593. Edition 5th, 1706.

assur'd them, was gone, and such *Evidences* or *Signs* might be of Use to *enable* them to adhere unto the *Assent* formerly given upon that *supernatural Evidence*, that at first accompanied the *Revelation*. Such *Signs* then might be of Use to strengthen the Remembrance of that *first Evidence*, which they had when the *Revelations* were first imparted to them. These and other Reasons of an alike Nature might sufficiently account for their desiring these *Signs*, and God's giving them: But as has been said, we design not a Determination or full Decision of this Question.

We shall only consider the Question with Respect unto the *two last Sorts* of Persons, and as to these who heard, or had *Divine Revelations* immediately from *inspir'd Persons*, or *rational Divines* seem positive, That the *Evidence* whereon they *assented* to what they delivered as the Mind of God, consisted in, or did result from the *Miracles* they wrought, and other *external Signs*, or *Proofs*, which they gave of their *Mission* from God. *Monsieur le Clark* in his *Emendations* and *Additions* to *Hammond* on the *New Test.* gives us this Gloss on 1 *Cor.* 2. 5. "*Paul says he*, would have "the *Corinthians* believe him, not as a Philosopher proposing Probabilities to them, but as the Messenger of God, who had received Commandment from him, to deliver to them those Truths which he preach'd, and, That he thus receiv'd them, he did shew by the Miracles which he wrought. *And a little after he adds*, He whose Faith leans upon Miracles wrought by God's Power, his Faith is grounded upon the divine Power the Cause of these Miracles. As to this Opinion it self, I shall express my self more particularly just now: But as to *Monsieur Le' Clark* his fetching from this Text, he had no Manner of Ground for it. Let us but look into the Verse before, and there we find the Apostle telling the *Corinthians*, That in his Preaching he avoided the *enticing Words of Man's Wisdom*, and deliver'd his Message in the *Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power.* Upon the Back of this in the 5th Verse, he tells them, His Design in doing so was, *That* their *Faith* might *not stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God*, that is, on the powerful Demonstration of the Spirit of God, mention'd in the foregoing Verse. How *Monsieur le' Clark* came to dream of *Miracles*, and fetch them in here, while the Scope and every Circumstance of the Text stood in the Way of this Exposition, I cannot divine; for nothing is more alien and remote from the Sense of this Place. If the Author had follow'd the old approv'd *Interpeter of Scripture*, I mean the *Scripture it self*, and had look'd into the foregoing

Verse

Verse and Context, he had given us a more genuine Account: But *Philosophy* now set up for an *Interpreter*, I had almost said a *Perverter*, it certainly lead him into this violent and rediculous Glos. But to come to the Matter it self.

Miracles can be no otherwise the Ground of any *Assent*, than as they afford Ground for, or may be made use of as the *Medium* of an *Argument*, whereby the *Divine Mission* of the Worker is concluded and proven. This then must be the Opinion of these Gentlemen, That they, who heard the Apostles or Prophets, could not be satisfy'd in their Minds, That what they said was *divinely reveal'd*, until they were convinc'd of it by Proofs drawn from *Miracles* or *Signs*, wrought by the Preacher, and that this is not meerly my Conjecture, is evident from the Accounts we have of their Opinions, and *Hypothesis*, whereof this is reckon'd as a principal one, That the Mind of Man being rational cannot be mov'd, but by a rational Impression, that is, by the Force of effectual Reasons: And to the same Purpose we shall find Mr. *Lock* expressing himself by and by.

Spanhem. *Elench. Controversiarum, Page* 320. *Edit.* 1694.

Upon this *Hypothesis* it is evident, 1. That if a *Heathen* came in to a Christian Assembly, and heard *Paul* preaching, or even Jesus Christ himself, if he had never seen them work any *Sign* or *Miracle*, he would not be obliged to believe their Doctrine. 2. If the Apostles preached to those, among whom they wrought no *Miracles*, gave no such *outward Signs*, such Persons could not be obliged to believe them, the *Evidence* whereon such a *Belief* is founded being deny'd. 3. They who heard them, and saw the Miracles, could not be obliged to assent unto their Doctrine, until by reasoning they would have Time to satisfie themselves, how far natural Causes might go towards the Production of such Effects, and how far these Things, admitting them to be *supernatural*, could go toward the Proof of this, That what they deliver'd was from God. 4. If there was any among them so dull, as not to be capable to judge of these nice Points, I do not see how, upon these Principles they could be obliged to believe. These and the like are no strain'd Consequences, for it is undeniable, That our Obligation to believe arises from the proposal of due *objective Evidence*, if this is wanting, no Man can be obliged to believe.

As to us who neither convers'd with the inspir'd Persons, to whom such *Revelations* were originally given, nor saw the *Miracles* they wrought, we are told by those *Rationalists*, That we have *historical Proofs*. That

there

there were such Persons, That they wrote these these *Revelations*, which we now have, and, That they wrought such *Miracles* in Confirmation of their *Mission* and *Doctrine*; And upon the *Evidence* of these *Proofs* we must rest, they will allow us no other Bottom for our *Faith*, hence *Monsieur le' Clark* tells us, *That whatever Faith is this Day in the World among Christians depends, upon the Testimony of Men.*

Among many who have embrac'd this Opinion, Mr. *Lock* in his *Essay on Humane Understanding* has delivered himself to this Purpose, and upon several Accounts he deserves to be taken special Notice of: I shall therefore represent faithfully and shortly his Opinion, and the Grounds whereon it is founded, and make such Animadversions upon them, as may be necessary for clearing our Way. His Opinion you may take in the ensuing Propositions.

I. When he is speaking of the *different Grounds* of *Assent* and *Degrees* thereof, he says, "Besides
Hum. Underst. Book 4. Cap. 18. §. 14. P. 564, 565. "those we have hitherto mention'd, there is one Sort "of Propositions that challenge the highest Degrees "of our Assent upon bare Testimony, whether the "Thing propos'd agree or disagree with common "Experience and the ordinary Course of Things, or no. The Reason "whereof is, Because the Testimony is of such an one, as cannot deceive "or be deceiv'd, and that is of God himself. This carrys with it As- "surance beyond Doubt, Evidence beyond Exception. This is call- "ed by a peculiar Name *Revelation*, and our Assent to it, *Faith*: Which "as absolutely determines our Minds, and as perfectly excludes all Wa- "vering as our Knowledge it self.

II. This, notwithstanding he tells us in the very same
Ibid. Paragraph, "That our Assurance of Truths upon this "Testimony, *or to give his own Words*, Our Assent can be rationally no higher than the Evidence of its being a *Revelation*, "and that this is the Meaning of the Expressions it is delivered in. That is, as he himself explains it, "If the Reasons proving it to be a "Revelation are but probable, our Assurance amounts but unto a pro- "bable Conjecture.

3. He distinguishes betwixt *traditional* and *original Revelation*, by the last of these, says he, "I mean that first Impression
Book 4. Cap. 18. §. 3. P. 582. "which is made immediately by God on the Mind "of any Man, to which we cannot set any Bounds; "*and by the* other, those Impressions delivered over "to

" to others in Words, and the ordinary Ways of conveying our Con-
" ceptions on to another. And afterwards speak-
ing of *Immediate* or *original Revelation*, he tells us, *Ibid.* §. 5. *P.* 583.
" That no Evidence of our Faculties by which
we receive such Revelations, can exceed, if equal, the Certain-
" ty of our *intuitive Knowledge*. And in the preceeding Paragraph,
speaking of *traditional Revelation*, he tells us, " That
" whatsoever Truth we come to the clear Dis- *Ibid. Book* 4. *Cap.*
" covery of, from the Knowledge and Contempla- 18. §. 4. *P.* 582.
" tion of our own Ideas, will always be certainer to
" us, than those, which are convey'd by *traditional Revelation*.

IV. He tells us " That true Light in the Mind
" can be no other but the Evidence of the Truth *Book* 4. *Cap.* 19.
" of any Proposition, *and hereon he goes on to tell us*, §. 13.
" That there can be no other Evidence or Light
" in the Mind, about Propositions that are not self-evident, save what
" arises from the Clearness and Validity of those Proofs upon which it
" is receiv'd: *And he adds*, That to talk of any other Light is to put
" our selves in the Dark, or in the Power of the Prince of Darkness.

V. In the next Paragraph he tells us plainly, That
there is no Way of knowing any *Revelation* to be from *Ibid.* §. 14.
God, but by *rational Proofs, or some Marks in which*
Reason cannot be mistaken.

VI. In this next Paragraph he tells what before we have taken
Notice of, That the *internal Light* of *Assurance*, which
the Prophets had, was not sufficient to testify, That *Ibid.* §. 15.
the Truths impress'd on their Minds were from God
without other Signs.

Thus far of Mr. *Lock's* Opinion, which in Sum amounts to this, That even the *original Revelation*, had not in them *intrinsick Evidence*, sufficient to assure them on whom such Impressions were made, That they were from God; that other *Signs* were necessary to satisfy them; and that others who receiv'd such *Revelations* at second Hand, not from God immediately, but from inspir'd Persons, have no other Evidence to ground their *Assent* on, besides that which results from Arguments drawn from those Signs, whereby they did confirm their *Mission*; and that we have no Evidence who saw not these *Signs*, besides that of the *Historical Proofs*, whereby it is made out, That the Persons who wrote the *traditional Revelation* we have, wrought such *Signs*, in Confirmation of their *Mission* from God.

It

It is worth our While to dwell a little here, and more narrowly consider Mr. *Locks* Thoughts, and the Grounds of his Opinion; I shall therefore offer a few Observations on this Doctrine.

I. Mr. *Lock* in his first Propo tion, speaks very honourably of *Divine Faith*. As to the Assent or Act of *Faith*, he says, *That it is an Assent of the highest Degree, Assurance without Doubt.* As to the Ground of it, he says, *That it is such as challenges an Assent of the highest Degree*, That it is *Evidence beyond Exception*. These are goodly Words. *He has well spoken in all that he has said.* I wish that his Meaning and Heart may be found as good as his Words. *All is not Gold that glisters.* Let us then look a little more narrowly into his Meaning.

To find it out, we shall suppose that God, as no Doubt he did, does reveal immediately to *Paul* this Proposition, *Jesus is the Son of God*. Here is a *Revelation*: By *Paul* it is assented to. Well here is *Faith*. Now in his believing this Proposition, he may be said to assent to three Things, *That what God says is true, That Jesus is the Son of God*, and, *That God says this to Paul.*

Now, I ask Mr. *Lock* or any of our *Rationalists* that are of his Mind, To which of these three is it that *Paul* assents, *with an* Assent *of the highest Degree*, and of which he has *Evidence beyond Exception.*

1. Could Mr. *Lock* only mean, That we have the highest *Assurance* of this general Verity, *That God's Testimony is infallibly true*? No sure: For *First*, The Assent to *this Truth* is not an *Act of Faith*, but of *intuitive Knowledge.* The *Truth it self* is not a *Truth* here divinely reveal'd, but of Natural Evidence. This is not so much in this Instance expresly assented to as supposed known.

II. Doth Mr. *Lock* mean, That we assent to this Proposition, *That Jesus is the Son of God.* Had *Paul Assurance beyond Doubt*, and *Evidence beyond Exception* of this? But sure Mr. *Lock* knew that *Paul* in this Supposition does not assent at all to this Proposition, *Jesus is the Son of God absolutley*, but *as it is reveal'd.* Well then, all the *Evidence* that *Paul* has to ground his Assent upon, is the Evidence of this, *That God says so to him.* If then the Evidence of God, his saying so to him is not such as *challenges an Assent of the highest Degree, Paul* can not have the *highest Degree* of *Assurance* of that Proposition, the *Faith* whereof leans intirely upon his *Assurance* of this, *That God has reveal'd it.* For as Mr. *Lock* says very truly in that same Paragraph, *Our Assurance of any particular Truth, that is the Matter reveal'd,* can never rise higher in

in Degree than our Assurance of this that is reveal'd. If then *Paul* has not *Evidence beyond Exception*, That *God reveals the Proposition* we speak of to him, he can never have such Assurance of the *Truth* of the Proposition materially consider'd. Wherefore,

III. did Mr. *Lock* think in his Case, That *Paul* would have Evidence beyond Exception, challenging the highest Degree of Assent, and thereon *Assurance* beyond Doubt, or of the *highest Degree* of this, *That God did in very Deed say to* Paul, *That Jesus is the Son of God*; or of this Truth, *That Jesus is the Son of* GOD *as reveal'd*. It is the *Assent* to this Proposition that in proper speaking is *Faith*. The *Assent* to the general Proposition above-mention'd, is not an *Act of Faith* at all: Nor is the *Assent* to the Proposition reveal'd, materially considered, an *Act of Faith*. *Faith* in this Case, is only the *Assent* to that Proposition *as reveal'd*, or to the *Revelation of it*. If then, *Paul* has not the *highest Evidence* for, and thereon the *highest Assurance* of this, *That God says this to him*, his Faith can never be said to be the *highest Degree of Assurance*, or *Assent*. This then Mr. *Lock* must mean, or he means nothing. But yet I suppose he scarce thought so: For 1. He tells us afterwards, That we can have no Evidence for receiving any *Truth reveal'd*, that can exceed, if equal the Evidence we have for our *intuitive Knowledge*. If we have not then Evidence, equal, at least to that which we have for our *intuitive Knowledge*, for our Belief of God's being the *Revealer*, or that he speaks to us, we cannot have the *highest Degree of Assurance*. 2. He afterwards tells us, That we have no Evidence for this, That *this* or *that Truth is reveal'd* to us by God; but that which results from Reasons or Arguments, drawn from Marks, whereby we prove, That God *is the Speaker*: But Mr. *Lock* owns, That the Evidence of all our Reasonings, is still short of that which we have for our *intuitive Knowledge*. Now methinks this quite overthrows Mr. *Locks* goodly Concession. With what Consistency with Truth or himself, Mr. *Lock* wrote at this Rate, is left to others to judge.

II. Whatever there is in this Concession yielded in Favours of *Faith*, Mr. *Lock* afterwards takes Care that we, who now live shall not be the better for it: For afterwards he tells us plainly, "That whatsoever "Truth we come to the clear Discovery of, from the Knowledge and "Contemplation of our *Ideas*, will always be certainer to us, than those "which are convey'd by *traditional Revelation*. We have no *Revelation* at this Day, but that which Mr. *Lock* calls *traditional*. And here it is plain, That Mr. *Lock* thinks that our Certainty of any Truth we have

from this, is inferiour in Degree to any Sort of *natural Knowledge*, whether intuitive, rational or sensible.

III. It is manifest, That the Foundation of all is what Mr. *Lock* teaches in the *fourth Position* above-mention'd, wherein he tells us, *That to talk of any other Light in the Mind, beside that of* Self-evidence, Reason, *and* Sense, *is to put our selves in the Dark.* I have added this last, *the Light of Sense*, because Mr. *Lock*, tho' he mentions it not here, yet elsewhere he admits it. That we may understand Mr. *Locks* Assertion exactly, it must be observ'd, That Writers, when they treat of this Subject, usually take Notice of a *twofold Light*. There is *subjective Light*, by which is meant either our *Ability* to perceive, discern, know and judge of Objects, or our *actual Knowledge*, *Assent*, *&c.* Again there is *objective Light*, by which they mean that Evidence whence our *Knowledge* results, whereon it is founded, and which determines the Mind to assent or dissent. Now it is of this last that Mr. *Lock* is treating in his Chapter of *Enthusiasm*, from whence this Proposition is taken. And his Opinion is this: He owns, That there is a threefold *objective Light*, which is real and a just Ground for the Mind to assent on. There is first, *Self-evidence*, which is the Ground of our *intuitive Knowledge*, resulting from the obvious Agreement or Disagreement of our *Ideas*, appearing upon first View or Intuition, when they are compar'd. *Secondly*, There is *rational Light*, or the Evidence resulting from Arguments, wherein the Agreement or Disagreement of our *Ideas* is clear'd by assuming intermediate *Ideas*, by the Help of which our Mind is clear'd, as to what Judgment it is to pass. *Thirdly*, There is the *Light of Sense*, or the Evidence resulting from *Impressions* made on our Minds by the Intervention and Means of our *Organs of Sense*.

But besides these, he admits of no other objective Light or Evidence that may be a just Ground of Assent; and adds, "That to talk of any "other, is to put our selves in the Dark; yea, in the Power of the "Prince of Darkness, and turn *Enthusiasts*.

This Grape must be pressed, that we may taste its Juice, how it relishes. In the Consideration of this Doctrine deliver'd by Mr. *Lock*, we shall not at present enquire whether it really does not preclude all Place for Faith, properly so called. This in the Issue will be further clear'd.

But whatever there is as to this, if Mr. *Lock*'s Doctrine hold, certain it is, That either *Faith*, if there is such a Thing, must be founded on one of those three Grounds of *Assent*, or Sorts of *Objective Light*

Light, or it is altogether irrational. For an *Assent* not founded on, and to which we are not determin'd by *real objective Evidence* is brutish, irrational, and really *enthusiastick*, as being no Reason or Ground: And besides these three Sorts of Grounds, Mr. *Lock* admits of none. *Faith* therefore must be founded either on one or other of them, or it must want all Reason for it.

Further, it is to be observ'd, That Mr. *Lock* taking Self-evidence for for that which is immediately perceptible without the Intervention of any intermediate *Ideas*, by the natural Power of our *intellectual Faculties* not assisted, renew'd, elevated and influenc'd by any supernatural Influence; and taking sensible Evidence for that which is convey'd by the Intervention of bodily Organs, from corporeal Substances, cannot be thought to make either of these the Ground of *Faith* to the *Testimony* of God. And therefore it must have no Reason save that *rational Evidence*, which makes the middle Sort of *objective Light*. But I need not spend Time in proving this, since it is no more than what he has taught us in the fifth Proposition above-mentioned.

This Opinion thus far explain'd is indeed the Sum, and contains the the Force of what is pleaded, or, for ought I know, can be pleaded for the Judgment of our *Rationalists*. We shall therefore weigh the Matter more seriously, and proceed by some plain Steps in the ensuing Propositions.

"I. If good and solid Reasons can be produc'd for Proof of another "Sort of *objective Light* or *Evidence*, besides those three mention-"ed by Mr. *Lock*, it must be admitted, tho' we should not be able "to give a satisfying Account of its Nature, and other Concernments.

I. This I believe was never deny'd in the General as to other Things, by any Person or Judgment, adverting to, and understanding what he said, and why it then should be refused in this Case, I can see no Ground.

II. If any has ever in General denied this in *Words*, I am sure every Man *in Fact* admits it. Who is he that receives not many Truths, that admits not the Being of many Things, upon good Proof, from their *Causes*, *Effects*, *inseparable Adjuncts*, *&c.* of the Nature of which he can give give no satisfying Account? We all own the mutual Influence of our *Souls* and *Bodies* upon one another, upon the Proofs we have from the Effects: But whoever understood the Manner, how the

Soul operates on the *Body*, or the Body upon it? Instances of this Sort are innumerable.

III. Sufficient Proofs must always determine our *Assent*; and if there are such in this Case, it is unreasonable to refuse it.

IV. If we have sufficient Reasons to convince us, That there is a fourth Sort of *objective Light* distinct from those three admitted by Mr. *Lock*, and only deny it because we understand not, or cannot give a clear Account of its Nature, I cannot tell, but on this same Ground we shall reject, and be obliged to refuse these three Sorts admitted by him, for the very same Reason. Mr *Lock* perhaps has done as much as any Man to explain them: But were he alive, I believe he would be as ready to own as any, That he has been far from satisfying himself, or offering what may fully clear others as to the Nature of these Things, wherein *Evidence* consists, what it is, what is *Self-evidence*, or that *Evidence* which is the Ground of our *sensible* or *rational Knowledge*, how they operate and influence the *Assent*. All his Accounts are only Descriptions taken from *Causes*, *Effects* or the like. But what *objective Light* or *Evidence* is, wherein it really consists, and the like may be said of the rest, is as much a Mystery as it was before, when he tells us, That *Self-evidence* (*Ex. Gr.*) is that which is immediately perceiv'd without the Intervention of intermediate *Ideas*. Here I learn, That it is not *rational Evidence*, that requires such intermediate *Ideas*: But this is all, unless it be, That it is perceptible by the Mind, that is, it is Evidence. But what Evidence is, I am yet to learn. I think this Proposition is plain.

"II. A fourth Sort *objective Evidence* different from those three "assign'd by Mr. Lock is not *impossible*.

I. If any say it is, it lies upon him to prove it. That Mr. *Lock*, or Millions mo observ'd no such Light in their Minds, found themselves determin'd to assent by no other *objective Evidence* or *Light*, will not prove it *impossible*; yea will not prove, That actually there is no such *Light*; nay, will not prove, That there was no such *Light* in their own Minds. For Mr *Lock*, though he observ'd as accurately the Manner of his Mind, its Actings, as most Men, yet might not observe it so, but that he possibly overlook'd somewhat that pass'd there. And if really Mr. *Lock* did not assent upon other *Evidence* to some Things, tho' he observ'd it not, I doubt not but by this Time he is sensible it was his Loss that it was so. It cannot be pretended, That it is *impossible* for Want

of,

of a *sufficient Cause*, while that God is in *Being*, who is Author of the *three Sorts* of *Lights*, that are admitted, and who is *the Father of Lights*. Nor can it be pretended, That the Members of this Division stand contradictorily oppos'd to one another, as it is in this, *every Being* is *dependent or independent*.

II. If any will say yet, It is *impossible* there should be a *fourth* or a *fifth* Sort of *Light* or *objective Evidence*, I shall desire him only to stay a while, and consider the *Light of Sense*. It is nothing else save "that Evidence "that results from Impressions made on our Minds by Means of our "Organs of Sense. Well, hereon I shall ask two Questions.

First, Is it not possible for him who made those Conveyances or *Organs of Sense* to frame more such, quite different from those we already have, and by Means of them impart to us other Perceptions, and determine us to assent on the Evidence of the Impressions convey'd to our Minds by these other Senses? If it is possible, as I see not how rationally it can be questioned, here is at least a *fourth Sort* of *objective Light* determining our Minds to *assent*, admitted as *possible*.

Secondly, Here I would enquire, Whether may not he, who, by these bodily Organs we already have, impresses *Ideas* upon our Minds, and determines our Assent to their Agreement or Disagreement, *immediately, without the Intervention of such Organs*, make Impressions on our Minds, whereby our Assent or Judgment may rationally be sway'd? To deny this, will look very odd and irrational to sober Men, that have due Thoughts of God. If it is admitted, we have here at least the *Possibility* of another *Ground of Assent*, or *objective Light* acknowledg'd different from those condescended on by Mr. *Lock*.

III. We that have the Benefit of Sight, have in our Minds a Sort of *objective Evidence* of *Light*, different from all those which Men born blind have. And why should it be then thought impossible that others may have in their Minds an *Evidence* that we have no Experience of, and that it may be equally real, convincing, or more so than any that we have.

IV. Mr. *Lock* grants, That there are *extraordinary Ways* whereby the Knowledge of Truth may be imparted to Men, that God sometimes illuminates by his Spirit the Minds of Men, with the Knowledge of Truths, that there is no Bounds to be set to such *Divine Impressions*. Now if all this is so, why may there not be *Evidence* of a *different Sort*, resulting from such *extraordinary Impressions, Illuminations*, &c. allow'd to be also possible?

V. Either God *can reveal* his Mind so to Man, as to give him the

highest Evidence or *objective Light* that *he speaks* to him, who gets that *Revelation*, or he cannot. If he can, then there is *possible* an *objective Evidence*, and that of the *highest Sort*, different from those three mention'd by Mr. *Lock*; for that it must be different is evident, because Mr. *Lock* in this Case will allow no Place for *Self-evidence*, or that *Evidence* we have in our *intuitive Knowledge*, which he determines to be the *highest Degree* of these three Sorts he has admitted and own'd. Speaking of *immediate Revelation*, he says, "No Evidence of our Faculties, by which "we receive such Revelations, can exceed, if equal the Certainty of "our intuitive Knowledge, as we heard above. Since then this *Evidence* of the *highest Degree*, is different from that which we have in our *intuitive Knowledge*, if it is at all, it must be of a different Sort from any of those three: For by Concession it is not *Self-evidence*; and *Rational or Sensible it is not*, because these Sorts of *Evidence* are of a Degree inferiour to *intuitive Evidence*: If then it is *Evidence* of the *highest Degree*, since Mr. *Lock* will not admit it to be *Self-evidence*, it must be none of the *three*: And so we have a *fourth Sort* admitted *possible*. But if God cannot reveal his Mind, so as to give the *greatest objective Evidence*, That he speaks, or is the Revealer, then I say, It is plain, and follows unavoidably, That God's Testimony can never have from Man the *highest Degree of Assent*, which Mr. *Lock* above expresly acknowledg'd to be its Due. It is in vain to say, That God's Testimony is infallible: For our *Assent* to any Truth upon God's Testimony, as Mr. *Lock* truly says, can never rise higher, than the Assurance we have of this, That really we have God's Testimony, and take its Meaning. If then God cannot give us the *highest Evidence* or *objective Light* as to this, no Truth he offers can have from us the *highest Degree of Assent*. To me this looks like Blasphemy, to imagine, That God has made a rational Creature, to whom he cannot so impart his Mind as to give it such *Evidence* as is absolutely necessary to lay a Ground for intertaining his Testimony with that Respect, which is its unquestionable Due. That his *Testimony* is in it self *infallible*, will never make our *Assent* of the *highest Degree*, unless the *Evidence* of his giving Testimony is of the *highest Degree*.

"III. We assert, That *de Facto* there really is a Sort of *objective Evi-*
"*dence* or Light, different from those condescended on by Mr. *Lock*.

I. The *Prophets* to whom *immediate Revelations* were made, had *objective Evidence* or Light sufficient to ground the *highest Assurance*, That the Truths impress'd on their Minds were from God. It is impious to deny it. But this Mr. *Lock* will not allow to be such *Evidence* as we have

have in our *intuitive Knowledge*, and all must confess, That it did not result from their *outward Senses*, and that it was not grounded on Reasonings from *Evidences*, *Marks* or *Signs*, extrinsecal to the *Revelations* themselves, seems undeniable, or even from Reasoning, and making Inferences from what was intrinsecal to the *Revelation*. For, 1. we find not, that this *Perswasion* came to them by such Argumentation or Reasoning. We can see no Ground from any Accounts we have in *Scripture* to think, That they took this Way to assure their own Minds. Yea, 2. The Scripture Accounts of the Way of their being convinc'd, seem all to import, That as God impress'd the Truths on their Minds, so that immediately by that very Impression, he fix'd an indelible and firm Conviction of his being the *Revealer*. Again, 3. We see, That the Evidence was so convincing as to bear down in them the Force of the *strongest Reasonings* and the *clearest Arguments* that stood against it, as we see evidently in the Case of *Abraham*, he is commanded to offer his Son *Isaac*. If this Command had not been impress'd on his Mind with an Evidence, That God was the Revealer, beyond what any Reasoning upon *Signs* and *Marks*, and I know not what, could pretend to, the strong plain Arguments that lay against it, strengthned by a Combination of the strongest natural Affections must have carry'd it. 4. If *Abraham* was convinc'd by such *Reasonings*, That God reveal'd this, that this Command was from God, is it not strange that he makes no Mention of them, when it was so obvious, That it was liable to be question'd whether God could give such a Command. But the Truth of it is, it is obvious to any one that thinks that nothing could prevail in this Case, but the *incontroullable* and *irresistible Evidence* resulting from the *very Impression*, whereby the Command was reveal'd. But to wave any further Consideration of this, which now we have no Experience of.

II. Mr. *Lock* will admit, That the *primitive Christians*, who embrac'd the *Gospel*, did it upon *sufficient objective Evidence*. He is not a *Christian* who denys it. But he will not admit *intuitive Evidence* in this Case. And I shall, I hope, afterwards make it appear, That it was not on the *Evidence* of such Reasonings, as Mr. *Lock* talks of, that they imbrac'd it.

III. The *Scriptures* demand our *Assent*, and offer no *Evidence* but this of *God's Authority*. And Arguments are not insisted on to prove, That it is God that speaks; God calls us not to *assent* without *objective Evidence*, and yet waves the Use of such Arguments as Mr. *Lock* would have to be the Foundation of our *Faith*. There must certainly be therefore

some

some *objective Light* of a different Sort suppos'd, that must be the Ground of our *Assent*. And that there really is so, the *Scriptures* teach, as we shall see afterwards, when this *Proposition* must be proven, and explain'd more fully.

IV. Abstracting from what has been said, we have as good Ground as can be desir'd, and as the Nature of the Thing admits, for believing there is really a *Light* distinct from those mention'd by Mr. *Lock*. As to the Persons who have it, this *Light* evidences it self in the same Way as the other Sorts of *intellectual Light* do. They are conscious of it, and find it has the same Effect determining the Mind to assent, assuring it, and giving it Rest in the full Conviction of Truth. As to others who want it, They have such *Evidence* as a blind Man has, That there is such a Thing as *visible Evidence*. They have the concurring Suffrage of Persons sober, judicious and rational, who have given Evidence of the greatest Cautiousness in Guarding against Delusion, *Enthusiasm* and groundless Imaginations. Besides, the Effects peculiarly flowing from such a *Faith* as leans on this Foundation, gives Evidence to it. But I cannot stay to prove this further at present.

" IV. Tho' perhaps an Account every Way satisfying cannot be given " of the Nature of this *Light*, nor can we so clear what it is, and where- " in it consists, as to make those who are unacquaint with it, understand " it, or have as exact a Notion of it as they have, whose Experience " satisfys them as to its Reality: Yet such an Account may be given " of it, as may secure it against the Imputation of Unreasonableness, and " Unintelligibility. To this Purpose, I shall only observe the few " Things ensuing.

I. That *Light* or *objective Evidence*, whereon we are obliged to believe, and all that are subjectively enlightned to believe the *Scriptures*, and ground their *Assent*, is such, that a more intelligible Account by far may be given of it to those, who have no Experience of it, than can be given of the *objective Evidence* of visible Objects to Persons who have no Experience of Sight. To clear this,

II. It is to be observ'd, That in the Writings of Men, especially of some, who have any Peculiarity of Genius, and excel in any Kind, we find such Characters, Marks and peculiar Evidences of them, not only in the Matter, but in the Manner of Expression and Way of Delivering their Thoughts. There is such a Spirit, and somewhat so peculiar to themselves to be observ'd, that such as have any Notion of their Writings, cannot thereon avoid a Conviction, That this or that Book, tho'

tho' it bears not the Author's Name, or those other Marks, whereon we depend as to our Opinion of the Authors of Books, of whom we have no particular Acquaintance, is yet writ by such an Author, the Vestiges of whose peculiar Spirit and Genius run through, and are discernible in the Strain of the Book. There are few Men, who are acquaint with Books, and read them with Attention and Judgment, who have not the Experience of this. And hence we are frequently referr'd to this, as what may satisfy us, That Books that bear such Authors Names are genuine and truly theirs. And it is found more convincing than the Attestation of no incredible Witnesses in many Cases. Yet it must be confess'd, That Persons of the best Judgment, and most capable to express their Thoughts will find it difficult, if not impossible to express intelligibly wherein this *objective Evidence* consists: But that really it is there, that there is such a Thing, is impossible for them to question.

Though you had not nam'd the Author, &c. I could have both known, and avouched him. There is a Face of a Stile, by which we Scholars know one another, more less than our Persons by a visible Countenance. Bishop Hall, Pref. to Dr. Twiss, his doubting Conf. resolv'd Page 2.

111. If poor Men who differ infinitely less from one another, than the most exalted created *Being* can be supposed to do from God, do impart to the Product of their own Thoughts, and leave on their Writings such peculiar and discernible Characters of their own Genious and Spirit, as, at first View, upon the least serious Attention, convinces the Reader, That they are the Authors, and enables him to distinguish their Writings from others, is it not Reasonable to suppose, That a Book written by God, must carry on it a peculiar and distinguishing Impress of its Author, and that by so much the more certainly discernible, by any that has right Notions of him, as the Difference betwixt him and the most exalted humane Genius is infinitely greater, than that betwixt the most contemptible *Pamphlet-writer* and the most *elevate Scholar?* Nay, it is not impossible rationally to imagine the Contrary? Can we think, That he, who in all his Works, even in the meanest Insects, has left such *objective Evidence*, and such *Impressions* of himself, whereby he is certainly known to be the Author, has not left Impressions, more remarkable and distinguishing, on his *Word, which he has magnified above all his Name*, that is all the Means whereby he designs to make himself known, and which he design'd to be the prin-

cipal Means of imparting the Knowledge of himself to Men, and that to the highest Purposes, their *Salvation* and *his own Glory*?

IV. This Impress, those Characters, Prints and Vestiges of the infinite Perfections of the *Deity*, that unavoidibly must be allow'd to be stamp'd on, and shine, not meerly or only or principally, in the Matter, but in that as spoken or written, and in the Writings or Words, in their Stile, the Spirit running through them, the Scope, Tendency, *&c.* This θεοπνευστια or God becoming Impress of *Majesty*, *Soveraignty*, *Omniscience*, *Independence*, *Holiness*, *Justice*, *Goodness*, *Wisdom* and *Power*, is not only a sufficient & real, but in very Deed, the *greatest objective Light and Evidence* imaginable. And where one has an *Understanding given to know him that is True*, and is made thereby to intertain any suitable Notion of the *Deity*, upon Intuition of this *objective Evidence*, without waiting to reason on the Matter, his *Assent* will be carry'd, and unavoidibly determin'd to rest on it as the highest Ground of *Assurance*. And this *Assent* founded on this *Impress* of the *Deity* in his own Word, is indeed an *Assent* of the *highest Degree*. And *thus far Faith resembles our intuitive Knowledge*, *with this Difference*, not as to the *Manner* of the Mind's Acting, but as to the *Ability* whence it acts; that in our *intuitive Knowledge*, as Mr. *Lock*, and those of his Opinion, restricts it, the *Evidence* or *objective Light* is such as not only is immediately without Reasoning discern'd, but such as lies open to, and is discernible by our *Understandings*, without any *subjective Light*, any Work of the Spirit of God either repairing our disabled Faculties, or elevating, and guiding them to the due Observation, or fixing their Attention, or freeing their Minds of the Power and present Influence of Aversion of *Will*, Disorder of *Affections*, and Prejudices that obstruct the discerning Power. Whereas this is really necessary in this Case, and tho' the *objective Evidence* is great, and still the same; yet according to the greater or lesser Degree of this Assistance, our *Assent* must be *stronger* or *weaker*, more fix'd or wavering.

V. When this *objective Evidence* is actually observant to, and under the View of the *Mind* thus enabl'd, dispos'd and assisted, there doth arise from it, and there is made by it, an Impression on the whole Soul corresponding thereto. The beaming of God's soveraign Authority awes Conscience. The piercing Evidence of his *Omniscience* increases that Regard, the View of *Goodness*, *Mercy*, *Love* and *Grace* operates on the *Will*, and leaves a Relish on the *Affections*, and this truly resembles *sensible Evidence*, tho' it is of spiritual Things, and of a spiritual Nature; nor

nor is it, as it is *Evidence*, inferiour to, but upon many Accounts preferable to that wich results from the *Impression* made by *sensible Objects*. And this, as was observ'd of the former, is also greater or less, according, and in Proportion unto the View we have of that *objective Light* above-mention'd. This *self-evidencing Power* is a Resultancy from, and in Degree keeps Pace with that *self-evidencing Light*.

VI. The Effects wrought on the Soul are such, many of them, as not only are most discernible in the Time, but likewise do remain on the Soul; some of them *ever after*, many of them for a long Tract of Time, and in their Nature, are such, as evidently tend to the Perfecting of our Faculties, are suitable to them, and for their Improvement, even according to what unprejudic'd and sober Reason determines, as to that wherein the Defects of our Faculties, and their Perfection consists. And the Reality of those Effects, whereof the Mind is inwardly conscious, appears to the Conviction of Beholders, in their Influence upon the Persons Deportment before the World. And,

VII. Hence it is, That though our Conviction neither needs, nor is founded on *Reasonings*; yet from those Effects Ground is given, and Matter offer'd for a rational & argumentative Confirmation of our *Assent*, and the Grounds thereof, and the Validity of it for our own Confirmation, when that *Evidence* which first gave Ground for our *Faith*, and wherein it rests, is not actually under View, as also for the Conviction of others.

VIII. This *Evidence* is such, as indeed challenges, and is a sufficient Bottom for an *Assent* of the *highest Degree*. And indeed the Saints of God, and that even of the meanest Condition, and who have been under the most manifest Disadvantages, both as to *Capacity* and *Education*, with the like Occasions of Improvement, upon this Bottom have reach'd *Faith*, comprizing *Assurance* without Doubt, even that *full Assurance of Faith*, yea *the Riches of the full Assurance of Understanding*, as has been evident by the Effects in *Death* and *Life*, of which we have notable Instances not a few in *Heb.* 11. throughout, both in *Adversity* and *Prosperity*, *Life* and *Death*.

" V. I observe, That this *Light* or *objective Evidence* whereon *Faith* is " bottom'd, has no Affinity with, but is at the furthest Remove from " *enthusiastick Impulse*, or *Imaginations*.

I. This is not a Perswasion without Reason. Here is the strongest Reason, and the *Assent* hereon past leans upon the most *pregnant Evidence*.

II. It carries no Contradiction to our *Faculties*, but influences them, each in a Way suitable to its Nature and Condition.

III. Yea more, none of our *Faculties* in their due Use do contradict, or at least disprove it. Whereas *enthusiastick Impressions* are *irrational*.

IV. This is not a Perswasion, nor a Ground for it without, or contrary to the *Word*, but it is the *Evidence* of the *Word it self*, that by it we are directed to attend to, and improve.

V. Yea it is what our other *Faculties* in their due Use will give a *consequential Confirmation* to, as we have heard. Wherefore,

VI. Mr. *Lock* shall be allow'd to run down *Enthusiasm* as much as he pleaseth, and *Perswasions whereof no Reason can be given, but that we are strongly perswaded*, or not to give Credit to those that can say no more for themselves, *but we see or feel*, &c. But these Things as deliver'd by Mr. *Lock*, need some Cautions. As, 1. A Perswasion whereof no Reason can be given, is certainly not *Faith* but *Fancy*: But a Perswasion, whereof he that hath it, through Weakness, cannot give an Account, may be *solid*. 2. A Perswasion may be *solid*, of which he that hath it, cannot give another *Evidence* of the same Kind he hath himself. It is enough that Proof of another Sort, & sufficient in its Kind, is offer'd. 3. If one says, He sees and he feels, this may be satisfying to him, tho' he cannot give any distinct Account of the *Evidence* he hath. And that he cannot thus account for the Nature of Things that are within him, concludes not against the *Reality* and *Truth* of what he has the *Experience*; But his *Experience* is not Ground of Conviction to *others*, unless other Proofs are offer'd. A Man of a shallow Capacity, destitute of Education, might be convicted of *Enthusiasm* by a subtile blind Man, to whom he cannot for his Seeing give an *Evidence* of the same Kind, nor open the Nature of *visible Evidence*, nor give any other Proof, That he is not mistaken, but that *he sees*, and yet he is not mistaken, assents not without Reason, and has no Ground to call in Question what he sees, but may and will securely laugh at all the blind Man's Quirks, and tell him, *he is blind*. The Case is parallel. We must not by this *atheistical Scare-crow* be frighted out of our *Faith* and *Experience*.

" VI. That many read the *Scriptures*, without discerning any Thing " of this *Light*, is no Argument against it. For,

I. Many want that *supernatural Ability*, that *Understanding* whereby God is known, whereby *Christ's Sheep know his Voice from that of a Strangers*, *and so not being of God, they cannot hear his Words*.

II. Many

II. Many want, and are utterly destitute of any tolerable Notions of God: It is impossible such should discern what is suitable to him.

III. Many have perverse Notions of God riveted on their Minds, and that both among the Learn'd and Unlearn'd, and finding the Scripture not suited to, but contrary to those false preconceiv'd Impressions, they look on it as Foolishness.

IV. Many want that humble Frame of Spirit, which has the Promise of *Divine Teaching*; *The Meek he guides in the Way.* It is they who are Fools in their own Eyes, who get Wisdom.

V. Many are proud and conceited deeply, and no Wonder then that they know nothing.

VI. Many have the *Vanity of their Minds uncur'd*, and so hunt after vain Things, and fix not in Observation of what is solid, and thereby *their foolish Hearts are hardn'd*, and *their Minds darkn'd* and diverted.

VII. Not a few are under the Power of prevailing Lusts, disorder'd Affections, and out of Favour to them they are so far from desiring an Increase of Knowledge, that on the Contrary, *they like not to retain God in their Knowledge.* What they already know, is uneasy to them, because contrary to their Lusts, and therefore they would be rid of it.

VIII. Many there are that despise the Spirit of God, reject his Operations, seek not after him, contemn him: And no Wonder such as refuse the Guide, lose their Way.

IX. Many for those and other Sins, are judicially left of God to the *God of this World, who blinds the Minds of them that believe not.*

X. Many never attempt to do his Will, and so no Wonder they come not to a Discerning whether the Word spoken and written is of God. And if all these Things are consider'd, we shall be so far from questioning the Truth, because many see not the *Evidence*, That *this very Blindness* will be an Argument to prove the Truth of it, and a strong Evidence of the Need of it, and of *supernatural Power* to believe it.

Finally, Persons sober and attentive want not some darker Views of this *Evidence*, which may and should draw on to wait for more. And I take the honourable Concessions, in Favours of the Scriptures, made by Adversaries, to have proceeded from some fainter View of this Sort.

Thus I have considered the Force of what I had pleaded by Mr. Locke, stated,

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stated the Question, cleared in some Measure our Opinion as it stands oppos'd to that of the *Rationalists*, assign'd an intelligible Notion of the *Reason of Faith*, and shew'd it to be such as the Meanest are capable of, and such as is propos'd to all who are oblidg'd to believe the Scriptures, whereas these *historical Proofs* are above the Reach of Thousands, and were never heard of by innumerable Multitudes, who, on Pain of Damnation, are oblig'd to receive the Scriptures as the *Word* of God.

IV. Having in our third *Observation* overthrown the Ground of Mr. *Lock's* Opinion, we now are to clear, That what Mr. *Lock* builds on, it must of Course fall, as particularly what he tells us, *Lib* 4. *Cap.* 18. *Par.* 6. *Pag.* 584. " That they, who make *Revelation* alone the sole " Object of *Faith*, cannot say, That it is a Matter of *Faith*, and not of " *Reason*, to believe, That such or such a Proposition, to be found in " such or such a Book, is of *Divine Inspiration*; unless it be reveal'd, " That that Proposition, or all in that Book was communicated by *Di-* " *vine Inspiration*. *And he goes on telling us*, That without such a *parti-* " *cular Revelation*, assuring us of this, That this Proposition is by *Di-* " *vine Inspiration, it can never be Matter of Faith, but Matter of Reason to* " *assent* to it.

What Mr. *Lock* designs by this Discourse, I know not; unless he meant to put us under a Necessity to prove every Proposition of the *Scripture* to be of *Divine Inspiration*, before we believe what it exhibits. And if this is what he intends, he overthrows the *Christian Religion* intirely, at least as to its Use and Advantage to the Generality. But waving what further might be observ'd, I shall only animadvert a little upon that one Assertion, " That our Belief, That this or that Pro- " position is from God, is not an an Act of Faith, but of Reason. As to which I say,

I. If Mr. *Lock* design'd no more but this, That the mention'd *Assent* to the *Scripture Propositions*, is an Act of, and subjected in our *rational*, or *intellective Faculty*, it might well be admitted. Or,

II. If Mr. *Lock* meant, That this *Assent* is agreeable to the Nature of our Minds, that is, That it is not really contrary to the true Principles of Reason, nor such as proceeds without such Grounds, as the Nature of our Understandings require for founding an *Assent*, we should admit, That in this Sense, it is an *Act* of *Reason*, that is, a *rational Act*, as not only being elicit by our Understandings, but depending on such a Reason or Ground, as the Nature of the intellectual Power requires,

requires, and which must alway be consistent with our certain Knowledge. But,

III. Neither of these being intended, we cannot go along with Mr. *Lock* in what he Means by this Expression, *That our Belief of* Scripture-Propositions, *is an Act of Reason*, that is, an *Assent* not built upon *Divine Testimony*, but on such other Arguings and Reasonings, as we can find out for proving that God reveal'd it. Because we say, and shall afterwards prove, That the Scriptures do evidence themselves to be from God, in that Way above-express'd, and afterwards to be explain'd and confirm'd, which we hope shall be done in such Sort, as may effectually repel the Force of what Mr. *Lock* has pleaded in Opposition to the *Scriptures*, and shew, That there is no Reason for ranking all the Truths therein delivered amongst those conjectural Things that lean only on Probabilities and Reasonings from them, which Mr. *Lock* evidently does, while he sinks *traditional Revelation* as to the Point of Certainty below our *intuitive*, *rational* and *sensible Knowledge*; and banishes all *Faith*, properly so call'd, out of the World, leaving no Room for it, and substituting in its Place an *Act of Reason*, proceeding upon *Probabilities*, that is, on *historical Proofs*, which he reckons only among *Probabilities*; nor do I blame him for this last, tho' perhaps some Things he has offer'd on this Head, might be excepted against; but this is not my Business.

I. The Question amounts to this in short, "Whereas the Scriptures, wherever they come, oblige all to whom they are offer'd, to "receive them not as the *Word of Man*, but, as indeed "they are, the *Word of God*; upon what Ground? *1 Thess.* 2. 13. "or formal Reason is it, that we assent thus unto "them, and receive them as the *Word of God*, to his Glory and our Salvation, in Compliance with our Duty?

In Answer to this important Query, I shall offer what upon a Review of former Experience, Consideration of the Scriptures, and what others, especially that judicious and profound Divine Dr. *Owen*, in their two Treatises he has writ on this Subject, have writ on this Head, appears satisfying to me: And this I shall do in the few following Propositions which I shall, with as much Brevity and Perspicuity as I can, lay down, explain, and shortly confirm with some few Arguments.

PROP. I.

" That *Faith* whereby we *assent* unto, and *receive* the *Word of God*, to his " Glory and our Salvation, is *Faith Divine* and *Supernatural*.

I. THere are at this Day, who teach, That whatever *Faith* is this Day to be found amongst Men, is built upon, and resolv'd into the *Testimony* of Men. And therefore it will be necessary to insist a little in confirming and explaining of this important Truth. *Le' Clerk in his Logicks.*

II. To clear this we observe, That the *Understanding*, or that *Faculty*, *Power* or *Ability* of the Soul of Man, whereby we perceive, and assent unto Truths upon their proper Evidence, may be destinguish'd or branch'd into diverse subordinate *Powers*, in Respect of the different Truths to which it assents. 1. We have an *Ability* of assenting unto the *self-evident Maxims* of *Reason*, such as that, *The same Thing, at the same Time, cannot be, and not be*, upon their own *self-Evidence*, without any other Argument, than a bare Proposal of them in Terms we understand. 2. We have an Ability to assent unto other Truths, upon Conviction of their Truth by Arguments, drawn from the fore-mentioned *self-evident Truths*, or any other acknowledg'd or own'd by us. 3. We have an *Ability* to assent unto Truths, upon the Evidence of the *Testimony* of *credible Witnesses*, or Persons worthy to be believ'd, and of deserving Credit. This *Ability*, and the Assent given by it to such *Truths*, upon such *Testimony*, are both call'd by the same common Name, *Faith*.

III. *Faith* then is that *Power* or *Ability* of the Mind of Man, whereby he is capable of *receiving*, and actually assents unto *Truths* upon the *Evidence* of the *Testimony* of Persons worthy of Credit, who know what they testify, and will not deceive us. Now whereas the Person giving this Testimony, is either *God*, *Men* or *Angels* good or bad, *Faith* may be consider'd as either *Divine*, *Humane* or *Angelical*. This *last*, as of no Consideration to our Purpose, we shall lay aside. *Faith*, or that *Ability*, whereby we assent to the *Testimony* of Men worthy of Credit, is call'd *Humane Faith*. And that whereby we assent to Truths upon the Evidence of the *Testimony* of God, who cannot lie, is called *Divine Faith*.

IV. *Divine Faith* is that *Power*, or *Ability* whereby we assent unto, and

and receive *Truths* propos'd to us upon Evidence of the *Word* or *Testimony* of God, to our own Salvation, in Compliance with our Duty, to the Glory of God.

V. In this Account of *Divine Faith*, we add, *in Compliance with our Duty, to the* Glory of God, *and our own Salvation*, because Devils and Men may yield some Assent unto *Truths*, upon the Evidence of God's *Testimony*, which neither answers their *Duty*, nor turns to the Glory of God in their Salvation, of which we do not now design to speak, and therefore by this Clause have cut it off, and laid it aside, as not belonging that *Faith* whereof we now speak, and whereby we conceive all, to whom the Scriptures come, are oblig'd to receive them.

VI. This *Faith* now describ'd may be call'd *Divine*, & *Supernatural*, and really is so on two Accounts, 1. Because this Ability is wrought in them, in whom it is found, by the *Divine* and *Supernatural Power* of God. 2. Because it builds not its Perswasion of, yields not its *Assent* unto the *Truths* it receives upon any *humane Authority* or *Testimony*; but upon the Testimony of God, who can neither be ignorant of any Truth, deceiv'd, or deceive us.

VII. It now remains, That we confirm this Proposition that we have thus shortly explain'd. And this we shall do by its several Parts. *First* then, We assert, *That this* Faith *is wrought in these, who have it, by the Power of God.* Now for clearing this, we shall only hint at the Heads of a few Arguments, leaving the further Proof to *polemick Treatises*. 1. This Ability to believe and receive the Things of God to our Salvation and his Glory, is in Scripture expresly deny'd to *natural* or *unrenew'd Men*. 2. *Thes.* 3. 2. " All Men have not Faith, 1. *Cor.* 2. 14.--- The natural Man receiveth " not the Things of the Spirit of God: For they are Foolishness unto " him: Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually dis- " cern'd. *Joh.* 8. 47.---- Ye therefore hear not God's Words, because " ye are not of God. 2. This is expresly deny'd to be of *our selves*, and asserted a *Supernatural Gift* of God. *Eph.* 2. 8. *By Grace are ye sav'd through* Faith, *and that not of your selves, it is the Gift of God.* 3. The Production of it is ascrib'd unto God. He it is that fulfils in his People *the Work of Faith with Power.* 2. *Thes.* 1. 11. He it is that gives them, that is, that enables them, *on the Behalf of Christ, to believe and suffer for his Name, Philip. Chap.* 1. 29. It's one of the *Fruits* produc'd by the *Spirit*, *Gal.* 5. 22. and of it Christ is the *Author*. *Heb.* 12. 2.

VIII. We are next shortly to prove, *That this Faith builds its Perswasion on the Testimony of God evidencing it self such unto the Mind*, and not

on *humane Testimony*. 1. It is in Scripture expresly said not to *stand in the Wisdom of Men*. 1. *Cor.* 2. 5, that is, it leans not on the *Word, Authority, Eloquence or Reasonings* of Men. 2. It is expresly in that same Verse, said to *stand in the Power of God*, that is, as the foregoing Words compar'd with v. 13 explain it, *in the Words which the Holy Ghost teacheth*, and which he demonstrates or evidences by his Power, accompanying them, to be the *Word of God*. 3. It is describ'd in such a Way as fully clears this; it's held forth as a *receiving of the Word, not as the Word of Man, but as it is indeed the Word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe*, 1. Thes. 2. 13. many other Proofs might be added, but this is sufficient to answer our Purpose.

IX. We shall next shortly prove, "That we are oblig'd in Duty thus "to believe the Scriptures, or to receive them as the Word of God, "and not of Men. 1. The Scriptures are indeed, and hold forth themselves every where as the Word of God. They are the Oracles of God, which *holy Men of God spake by the Motion of the Spirit of God*, and *wrote by Divine Inspiration*, and the *Holy Ghost speaks to us by them*. Now when God utters Oracles, speaks, writes and utters his Mind to us, we are in Duty oblig'd and bound to assent to what he says, and yield what Obedience he requires. This the very *Light of Nature* teacheth. 2. The Scriptures were written for this very End, That we might believe, *and that believing we might have Life*, *Joh.* 20. 30, 31. The Scriptures of the Prophets (which contain the *Revelation of the Mystery* of God's *Will*, otherwise not known) "according to the Commandment of the Everlasting GOD, *are* made "known unto all Nations for the Obedience of Faith, *Rom.* 16. 25, 26. Again the Scriptures are term'd a *more sure Word of Prophecy* than the *Voice from Heaven*, and Men are said to *do well, to take heed to* them, 2. *Pet.* 1. toward the Close. That is, it is their Duty *to take heed* to them or believe them. 3. The most dreadful Judgments are threatn'd against those who receive not the *Word of God* from the Prophets or Apostles, whether by Word or Writ, is all one. "Whosoever shall "not receive you, nor hear your Words, when ye depart out of that "House or City, shake off the Dust of your Feet. Verily I say unto "you, It shall be more tolerable for the Land of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, "in the Day of Judgement, than for that City, *Matth.* 10. 14, 15. Accordingly we find the Apostles preach the Word at *Antioch* in *Pisidia*

Heb. 5. 12. 2. Pet. 1. 20, 21. 2. Tim. 3. 16. Mar. 12. 36. Act. 1. 16. Acts 28. 25. Heb. 3. 7.

dia, *Act.* 13; demand Acceptance of it both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and upon their Refusal they testify against them in the Way of the Lord's Appointment, v. 51. Tho' so far as we can learn, they there wrought no Miracle to confirm their *Mission*. 4. We have above heard the Apostle commending the *Thessalonians* for *receiving the Word as the Word of God, and not of Man.* 1. Thes. 2. 13. which sufficiently shews that it was their Duty.

X. Whereas some may here say, *How can it be our Duty to believe the Word of God, since it has been above prov'd, That we are not able of our selves thus to do it.* I answer briefly, 1. The *very Light of Nature* requires *perfect Obedience* of us; and yet we are not able to yield it. 2. The Scriptures plainly require, *That we serve God acceptably with Reverence and Godly Fear*, and yet we must have Grace whereby to do it. 3. We have destroy'd our selves, and that through this, our *Faith* or *natural Ability of believing Truths upon Testimony*, is so impair'd and weakn'd, and by Prejudices so obstructed otherwise, that we are not able to discern the Evidence of God's *Authority* in his *Word*, nor assent thereon to his *Testimony* in a due Manner, yet this cannot prejudge reasonably God's Right to demand Credit to his Word, whereon he has impress'd such Prints of his *Authority*, as are sufficiently obvious to any ones *Faith*, that is not thus faultily deprav'd. 4. We have therefore no Reason to question God, who gave us Eyes, which we have put out, but to blame our selves, and aim *to do his Will*, that is wait on him in all the Ways of his own Appointment; and we have no Reason to despair, but that in this Way we may have graciously given of God's Soveraign Grace, an Understanding to know whether these Truths are of God, or they who spoke them did it of themselves. Tho' we cannot claim this as what is our due. Heb. 12. 28. Hos. 13. 9. 1. Joh. 5. 20. Joh. 7. 17.

Thus we have in some Measure clear'd what that *Faith* is, whereby the *Scriptures* must be believ'd to the Glory of God and our own Salvation, and confirm'd shortly our Account of it from the Scriptures of Truth. We now proceed to

PROP. II.

" The Reason for which we are oblig'd in Duty to believe or receive
" the Scriptures as the *Word of God*, is not, *That God has by his Spirit*
" *wrought Faith in us*, or *given us this Ability thus to receive them.*

THis Proposition we have offered, because some do blame *Protestants* for saying; whereas none of them really do it. Nor can any Man reasonably say it. For clearing this observe,

I. It is indeed true, That we cannot believe them, unless God give us this gracious *Ability* or *Faith* to believe them, and by his holy Spirit remove our natural Darkness, and clear our Minds of those Prejudices against his Word, wherewith naturally they are fill'd.

II. Yet this is not the Reason wherefore we do assent unto, or receive the Scriptures; for, it were impertinent, if any should ask, *Upon what Account do ye believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God?* to answer, *I believe it, because God has wrought the Faith of it in me.* This is not to tell wherefore we do believe, but to tell how we came to be furnish'd with *Power* or *Ability* to believe.

PROP. III.

" We are not to believe the Scriptures, upon the *Authority* of any Man
" or Church: Or the Reason wherefore we are in Duty bound thus
" to assent to, or receive the Scriptures as the *Word of God*, is not,
" *That any Man, or Church, says so.*

THis is fully demonstrate by our Writers against the *Papists*. For Confirmation of it, it is sufficient to our Purpose at present to observe,

I. That to believe, That the *Scriptures are the Word of God*, because such a Man, or Church says so, answers not our Duty. Our Duty is to believe God speaking to us, upon the Account of his own *Veracity*; and not because Men say, This is his Word. This is not
2 *Chr.* 20. 20. to believe God and his Prophets for the Sake of their own *Testimony*, but for the *Authority* of Men.

II. The *Faith* that leans upon this *Testimony*, is built not on the *Tru-*

of God; but on the *Testimony of Men*, who may be deceiv'd and deceive: *All Men are Liars.*

III. We have no where in the *Word* this propos'd as the Ground, whereon, in Duty, we are oblig'd to believe the *Scriptures.*

IV. The Church, and what she says, is to be tried by the *Word*, and her *Testimony* is so far only to be receiv'd as the *Word* consents: And therefore we cannot make this the Ground of our *Faith*, without a scandalous Circle, which the Church of *Rome* can never clear her self of.

But I need insist no further on this Head. That Church which only claims this Regard to her *Testimony*, is long since become so well known, and so fully convicted of manifold Falshoods, that her Testimony rather prejudges than helps to confirm whatever it is ingag'd for.

PROP. IV.

"The *rational Arguments* whereby the Truth of the *Christian Religion* "is evinc'd and demonstrate against *Atheists*, though they are many "Ways useful, yet are not the Ground, or Reason, whereon in a "Way of Duty, all who have the *Scriptures* propos'd to them, are "oblig'd to believe and receive them as the Word of God."

THese moral and rational Considerations are, and may be many Ways useful to stop the Mouths of Enemies, to beget in them, who yet are unacquaint with the true intrinsick Worth of the *Word*, some Value for it, and engage them to consider it, to relieve them that do believe, against Objections, and strengthen their *Faith*. This is allow'd to them; and is sufficient in this loose and atheistical Age, to engage Persons of all Sorts, who value the *Scriptures*, to study them. But yet it is not upon them that the *Faith* requir'd of us, as to the *Divine Authority* of the *Scriptures* is to be founded. For,

I. These are indeed a proper Foundation for a rational *Assent*, such as is given upon moral Proof or Demonstration. And they are able to beget a strong moral Perswasion of this *Truth*. But this *Assent*, which they beget, cannot, in any Propriety of Speech, be call'd *Faith*, either Divine or humane. For *Faith* is an *Assent* upon Testimony.

II. The *Faith* that is requir'd of us, is requir'd to be founded not on the *Wisdom of Men*, that is the Rea- 1 *Cor.* 2. 5.

sonings

sonings or Arguings of Men. Now this leans only and entirely on these.

III. This *Faith* is, in Way of Duty, requir'd of many. Many are in Duty oblig'd to receive the *Scriptures* as the *Word* of God, to whom these *Arguments* were never offer'd: The Apostles never made use of them; and yet requir'd their Hearers to receive and believe their Word.

IV. This *Faith* many are oblig'd to, who are not capable of understanding or reaching the Force of these Arguments.

PROP. V.

" The *Faith* of the *Scriptures Divine Authority* is not founded on this, " That they by whom they were written, did, by *Miracles*, prove " they were sent of God.

I Need not spend much Time in clearing this. It will sufficiently confirm it to observe,

I. That many are, and were in Duty oblidg'd to yield this *Assent* to, and believe the *Scriptures*, who saw not these *Miracles*.

II. We are no other Way sure of these *Miracles* being wrought, than by the *Testimony* of the *Word*.

III. This Way is not countenanc'd by the *Word*: For it no where teaches us to expect *Miracles* as the Ground of our *Luk.* 16. 31. *Assent*, but upon the Contrary declares, That the Word of *Moses* and the *Prophets* is sufficient to lay a Foundation for *Faith*, without any new *Miracle*.

PROP. VI.

" The *Reason* whereon, in Duty, we are bound to receive the *Scrip-* " *tures* as the Word of God, is not any *private Voice*, *Whisper* or " *Suggestion* from the Spirit of God, separate and distinct from the " *written Word*, saying in our Ear, or suggesting to our Mind, " *The Scriptures are the Word of God.*

THere is no need to insist long in Proof of this. For,

I. Many are bound to believe the Word of God, to whom never any such *Testimony* was given: But no Man is bound to receive the *Scriptures*

Scriptures, to whom the Ground whereon he is bound to believe them, is not propos'd.

II. There is no where in the Word, any Ground given for any such *Testimony*. Nor doth the Experience of any of the Lord's People witness, That they are acquaint with any such Suggestion. And besides, the Question might again be mov'd concerning this Suggestion, *Wherefore do ye believe this to be the Testimony of God?*

PROP. VII.

" That whereon all, to whom the *Word* of God comes, are bound to receive it with the *Faith* above describ'd, is not any *particular Word* " of the *Scripture* bearing Testimony to all the Rest. As for Instance, " It is not meerly or primarly upon this Account, that I am bound " to receive all the written Word as the Word of God, because the " Scripture says, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. *That all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God.*

THis is very plain upon many Accounts, some of which I shall shortly offer.

I. We had been oblig'd to believe the *Scripture* with *Faith Supernatural*, though these Testimonys had been left out. Yea they who had them not, were oblig'd to believe the *Word* of God.

II. These have no more Evidence of their being from God, than other Places of *Scripture*: And therefore we are not to believe the *Scriptures*, meerly on their *Testimony*: But have the same Reason to receive with *Faith* as the *Word* of God, every Part of the *Scripture* as well as these *Testimonys*.

PROP. VIII.

" The Reason why we are bound, with *Faith Supernatural* and *Divine*, to " receive the *Word* of God, is not, That the Things therein reveal'd, " or the Matters of the *Scriptures* is suitable unto the Apprehensions, " which Men naturally have of God, themselves and other Things, " and congruous to the Interests, Necessitys, Desires and Capacitys " of Men.

I Shall not spend Time in overthrowing this which some seem fond of, only for Confirming the Proposition observe,

I. This

I. This Suitableness of the Matter unto the *Apprehensions*, or *natural Notions* of Men concerning God, themselves and other Things, *&c.* as discern'd by Men unrenew'd, and made out by their Reasonings, is not a Ground for *Faith* or an *Assent* to *Testimony*, but for a *Perswasion* of another Sort.

II. There are many Things reveal'd in the *Scripture*, which are to any meer natural Man no Way capable of this Character. No Man receives, or can reasonably receive on this Account, the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, and the like. It is true, these are not contrary to our Reason: But it is likewise true, they have no such *evident Congruity* to the *Notions* our *Reason* suggests of God, as should engage us to receive the Discovery as from God; yea on the Contrary, there is a seeming Inconsistency that has startled many.

PROP. IX.

" When therefore it is enquired, Wherefore do ye believe, and by *Faith*
" rest in the *Scriptures* as *the Word of God, and not of Man?* We do
" not answer, It is because God has given us an *Ability* so to do;
" because the Church says, It is *the Word of God*; because there are
" many strong *moral Arguments* proving it so; because they who
" wrote it, *wrought Miracles*; because God has by some *Voice* whis-
" per'd in our Ear, or secretly suggested it to us, That this is *the Word*
" *of God*; or because there are *particular Scriptures* which bear Wit-
" ness to all the rest that they are of God; nor finally, because the
" *Matter therein reveal'd*, seems worthy of God to our Reason.

THis is the Sum of what has been hitherto clear'd: And the Reasons offer'd conclude against all these, whether we take them separately or conjunctly. They prove, That not *one* of them, nor *all* taken together, are the *formal Reason* whereon we are oblig'd to *believe the Word of God*, or *receive* it with *Faith Supernatural* and *Divine*.

PROP. X.

" The *formal Reason* or *Ground* whereon I *assent* to, or *receive the whole*
" *Scriptures*, and every *particular Truth* in them, and am oblig'd in Duty
" so to do, is, The *Authority* and *Truth* of God speaking in them, and
" speaking every *Truth* they contain, evidencing it self to my *Faith*,
" when

" when duly exercis'd about them, and attending to them, by their " own *Divine* and *distinguishing Light* and *Power*. Or when it is en- " quir'd, Wherefore do ye *believe*, *receive*, *assent* to, and *rest* in the " *Scriptures* as *indeed the Word of God, and not of Man*? I answer, I do " believe them, because they carry in them, to my *Faith*, an *Evi-* " *dence* of God, or do evidence themselves by their own *Light* and " *Power* to my *Faith*, duly exercis'd about them, That they are *the* " *Word of God, and not of Man.*

NOw for explaining this, which is the Assertion that contains the *Truth* principally intended, I shall offer the few following Remarks;

I. However great the *Evidence* of God in the Word is, yet it cannot, nor is it requisite that it should, determine any to receive and assent to it, whose *Faith* and *Ability* of believing is not duly dispos'd: Though the Sun shine never so clearly; yet he that has no Eyes, or whose Eyes are vitiate, and under any total darkning Indisposition, sees it not. No Wonder then, that they, who have not naturally, and to whom God has not yet, by *Supernatural Grace*, given Eyes to see, Ears to hear, or Hearts to perceive, discern not the *Evidence* of God's *Authority* and *Truth* in the Word.

II. Albeit there really may be in any an *Ability*, or *Faith* capable of discerning this *Evidence*; yet if that *Faith* is not exercis'd, and duly apply'd to the Consideration of the *Word*, whereon this *Evidence* is impress'd, he cannot assent unto, or believe it in a due Manner, to the Glory of God, his own Salvation, and according to his Duty. There is *Evidence* sufficient in many *moral*, *metaphysical* and *mathematical Truths*: And yet Abundance of Persons, who are sufficiently capable of it, do not *assent* unto these *Truths*, nor discern this *Evidence*; not because it is wanting, but because they do not apply their Minds to the Observation of it in a due Way. God has not imparted such an *Evidence* to his *Word*, as the Light of the Sun has, which forces an Acknowledgment of it self upon any, whose Eyes are not wilfully shut: But designing to put us to Duty, he has imparted such *Evidence*, as they, who have Eyes to see, if according to Duty they apply their Minds, may discern, and be satisfi'd by.

III. This *Light* and *Power* evidencing the *Divine Authority* of the *Scriptures*, is really impress'd upon every Truth, or every Word which God speaks to us, especially as it stands in its own Place, related to, and

connected with the other Parts of the *Scripture*, whereto it belongs. But of this more anon.

IV. When to the Question, *Wherefore, or on what Grounds do I assent to the Scriptures as indeed the Word of God, and not of Man*, it is answer'd, I do it, because it *evidences it self* God's *Word* by its own *Light* or *Power*. There is no Place for that captious Question, How know ye this *Light* and *Power* to be *Divine*, or from God? For, it is of the Nature of all *Light*, *external* and *sensible*, or *internal* and *mental*, (anent which two it is hard to determine which of them is *properly*, and which only *metaphorically*, *Light*) that it not only clears to the Mind other Things discernible by it, but satisfies the Mind about it self, proportionably to the Degree of its Clearness. The Light of the Sun discovers sensible Objects, and satisfys us so fully about it self, that we need have Recourse to no new Argument to convince us that we have this Light, and that it is real. In like Manner the *Evidence* of any *mathematical Truth*, not only quiets us about the Truth, but makes the Mind rest assured about it self. And so the *Divine Light* and *Power* of the *Word*, not only satisfies our Minds, as to those Truths they are design'd of God to discover, but, in Proportion to the Degree of Light in them, or convey'd by them, satisfy the Mind about this *Light* or *Power*, That it is *Truth* and is *no Lie*. Nor is there need for any other Argument to convince a Mind affected with this, of it. It is true, if a blind Man should say to me, How know ye that the Sun shines, and ye see it? I would answer, I know it by the *Evidence* of its own Light affecting mine Eyes: And if he should further say, But how prove ye to me, That ye are not deluded, that really it is so? Then I would be oblig'd to produce other Arguments whereof he is capable: But then it must be allow'd that the *Evidence* of these Arguments is not so great as the *Evidence* I my self have of it by its own Light; tho' they may be more convincing to him. And further, this is not to convince my self, but to satisfy him, and free my Mind from the Disturbance of his Objections: In like Manner, if one, that denys the *Scriptures*, shall say, Wherefore do ye *believe* or *rest* in the *Scriptures* as the *Word of God*? I answer, I do it, because they evidence themselves to my Mind, by their own *Light*, or *Power*, to be of God: If he shall say, I cannot discern this. I answer, It's because your Mind is darkned, ye want Eyes, or have them shut: If he shall further urge, That my *Light* is not *real*, I will prove it by Arguments, which may stop his Mouth, and be more convincing to him than my Assertion, which is all that hitherto he has, but yet these Arguments

guments are not that whereon my Mind rests satisfi'd as to the *Truth*; though they may be of great Use, not only to convince him, but to relieve my Mind against such subtile Sophisms, as he might make use of, which, though they could not perswade me out of the Sight of my Eyes, or the Evidence shining to my Mind, yet troubled me how to answer them, and at Times, when, through my Inadvertency, or Indisposition of my Eyes, or through Clouds overspreading and interposing betwixt this *Light* and me, these Objections might shake me a little.

V. Considering we are but renew'd in Part, and our *Faith* is imperfect, and liable to many Defects, the *Ministry* of the *Church* is of manifold Necessity and Use, to awaken us to attend this Light, to cure the the Indispositions of our Minds, to hold up this Light to us, to point out and explain the Truths it discovers, whereby our Minds are made more sensible of the Evidence of this Light. And upon many other Accounts of an alike Nature, are the Ordinances necessary, and through the Efficacy of the Divine Ordination and Appointment, useful for establishing our Minds, naturally sluggish, dark, weak and unstable, and which are expos'd to manifold Temptations, in the *Faith* of the *Scriptures*.

VI. In Order to our holding fast our *Faith*, and being stable in it, besides this *outward Ministry*, and the *inward Work* of the Holy Ghost, giving us an Understanding to discern this *Evidence*, and besides the forementi-on'd Use of the *moral Arguments* above-mention'd; besides all these to our *Believing* and *Persevering*, in a due Manner, in the *Faith* of the *Scriptures*, we stand in need of the daily Influences of the Spirit of God, to strengthen our *Faith* or *Ability* of discerning spiritual Things, to clear our Minds of Prejudices, and incidental Indispositions, to seal the Truths on our Minds, and give us refreshing Tastes of them, and confirm us many Ways against Opposition.

VII. This *Light*, whereby the *written Word* evidences it self unto the Minds of those who have spiritual Ears to hear, and apply them, is nothing else, save the *Impress* of the *Majesty*, *Truth*, *Omniscience*, *Wisdom*, *Holiness*, *Justice*, *Grace*, *Mercy* and *Authority* of God, stamp'd upon the *Scriptures* by the Holy Ghost, and beaming or shining into the Minds of such Persons upon their Hearing or Perusal, and affecting them with a Sense of these Perfections, both in what is spoken, and in the *Majestick* and *God-becoming* Way of Speaking: They speak as *never Man spake*; the Matter spoken, and the Manner of Speaking, has a Greatness discernible by a spiritual Understanding, that satisfies it fully, That God

is the Speaker. And all the *Impressions* of God's *Wisdom*, *Faithfulness*, *Omniscience* and *Majesty*, that are stamp'd upon the Matter contain'd in the *Scriptures* being convey'd *only* by the *Word*, do join the Impressions that are upon the *Word*, and strengthen the *Evidence* they give of their *Divine Original*, since these *Impressions* do not otherwise appear to our Minds, or affect them, than by the Word. The *Word*, by a *God-becoming Manifestation* of the Truth, that scorns all these little and mean Arts of Insinuation, by fair and enticing Words, and artificially dress'd up Argumentations, with other the like Confessions of humane Weakness, that are in all humane Writings, commends it self to the Conscience, dives into the Souls of Men, into all the secret Recesses of their Hearts, guides, teaches, directs, determines and judges in them, and upon them, in the *Name*, *Majesty* and *Authority* of God. And when it enters thus into the Soul, it fills it with the *Light of the Glory* of the Beamings of those *Perfections* upon it; whereby it's made to cry out, *The Voice of God, and not of Man.*

VIII. This *Power*, whereby the *Word* evidences it self to be the Word of God and not of Man, is nothing else save that *Authority* and *awful Efficacy*, which he puts forth in and by it over the Minds and Consciences of Men, working divinely, and leaving Effects of his glorious and omnipotent Power in them and on them. It enters into the *Conscience*, a Territory exempt from the Authority of Creatures, and subject only to the Dominion of God, it challenges, convinces, threatens, awakens, sets it a roring, and the Creation cannot quiet it again. It commands a Calm, and the Sea, that was troubled before, is smooth, and Devils and Men are not able to disturb its Repose. It enters into the Mind, opens its Eyes, fills it with a glorious, clear, pure and purifying *Light*, and sets before it Wonders before unknown, undiscern'd in Counsel and Knowledge concerning God, our selves, our Sin, our Duty, our Danger, and our Relief, the Works, the Ways, the Counsels and Purposes of God. It speaks to the *Will*, converts it, and powerfully disingages it from what it was most engag'd to, what it embrac'd, and was even glu'd to, before; so that no Art or Force of Eloquence, Argument, Fear or Hope could make it quit its Hold: It makes it hastily quit its Imbraces, and turn its Bent another Way, the quite opposite Way, and with open Arms imbrace what nothing could make it look to before, takes away its Aversion, makes it willingly not only go, but run after what it bore the greatest Aversion to before, and obstinately refuse to close with any other Thing: It enters the Affections, makes them rise from the Ground,

Ground, gives them such a Divine Touch, that, though they may through their fickle Nature, be carried at a Time by Force another Way, yet they never rest, but point Heaven-ward: It comes to the Soul, sunk under the Pressure of unrelievable Distresses, sticking in the *miry Clay*, refusing Comfort, and in Appearance capable of none, it plucks it out of the Clay, raises it out of the horrible Pit, sets its *Feet upon a Rock*, fills it with Joy, yea makes it exceeding joyful, while even all outward Pressures and Tribulation contiue, yea are increas'd: It enters into the Soul, lays hold on the reigning Lusts to which all formerly had submitted, and that with Delight, it tries and condemns those powerful Criminals, makes the Soul throw off the Yoke, and join in the Execution of its Sentence against, and on them. Now where the Case is thus stated, how can the Soul, that feels this powerful *Word*, that comes from the Lord most High, do otherwise than *fall down*, and own, *That God is in it of a Truth.*

IX. Whereas some may hereon object, "That many, who have for a "long Time heard and perus'd this *Word*, have not perceiv'd this *Light*, "nor felt this *Power*, and, on this Supposition, seem exempted from "any Obligation to believe the *Word*. I answer.

I. Many who have spent not a few Years in prying into the *Works* of God in the World, have not discern'd to this Day the beaming Evidence, and clear Declarations of his Glory in them; yet none will hereon say, That they are excuseable, or that Want of an *Evidence* is chargeable on the Works of God. And why should not the Case be allow'd the same as to the Word? May they not have this *Evidence*, though Men do not discern it? And may not Men, even on Account of this *Evidence* be oblig'd to believe them?

No Wonder many discern not this *Light*, and are not affected with it, since all Men have put out their own Eyes, or impair'd by their own Fault, that *Faith* or *Power* of discerning the Voice of God, speaking either by his *Word* or *Works*, which our Natures originally had. In many this Evil is increas'd, and this *Power* further weakn'd by their shutting their Eyes, and Entertainment of Prejudices manifestly unjust against God's Word and Works. Others turn away their Eyes, and will not look to, or attend the *Word* in that Way wherein God ordains them to attend to it, That they may discern its *Light*, and feel its *Power*. And God has hereon judicially given many up to the *Power* of Satan to be further blinded. And no Wonder they, whose Eyes the *God of*

this

this World has blinded, should not discern the Glory of the Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God shining into their Minds.

III. No Wonder they should not discern this; for God to this Day has not given them *Eyes to see, Ears to hear*, or *Hearts to perceive*. It is an Act of Soveraign Grace, which God owes to none, to open their Eyes, which they have wilfully blinded, and where he sees not meet to do this, it is not strange, That they are not affected with the clearest Evidence.

IV. *Light*, however clear, cannot of it self supply the Defect of the *discerning Power*. The Sun, though it shines, cannot make the Blind to see. The *Word* has this *Light* in it, though the Blind see it not; yea I may adventure to say, That the *Word* of God contain'd in the Scriptures, which he has magnify'd above all his Name, has in it mo, and no less *discernible Evidences* of the *Divine Perfections*, and consequently of its *Divine Original* and *Authority*, than the Works of *Creation*, some of which are sufficient to carry in some Conviction of God in it, even on the Minds of those who are not savingly enlightned, if they attend but to it in the due Excercise of their *rational Abilities*, that is, in such a Manner as they do, or may attend to it, without saving Illumination, laying aside wilful Prejudice, which though it will not be sufficient to draw such an Assent, as will engage and enable them to receive the Scriptures, in a due Manner, to the Glory of God, and their own Salvation, and comply with them; yet I conceive it will be sufficient to justify against them the *Word's* Claim to a *Divine Orginal*, and cut them off from any Use of, or Excuse from a Plea of the Want of sufficient Evidence of the *Divine Original* of the *Word*. I nothing doubt, but many of these, who upon Conviction said, *That Christ spake as never Man spake*, were Strangers to saving Illumination, and yet saw somewhat of a Stamp and Impress of *Divinity* in what he said, and the Manner of saying it, that drew this Confession from them, that rendred them inexcuseable, in not listning to him, and complying with his Word. And I doubt not, the Case will be found the same as to many, with Respect to the *written Word*, and would be so to all, if they seriously, and without wilful Prejudices, attended to it.

X. I further observe, That to engage to this Assent, it's not requisite, That every one feel all these, or the like particular Effects at all Times, but that the *Word* have this *Power*, and put it forth, as Occasion needs, and Circumstances require it.

Having thus explain'd, we are now to prove our Assertion, " That " the

" the Ground whereon we are in Duty oblig'd to believe and " receive the *Word of God* as his *Word*, and not the *Word of Man*, and " whereon all who have receiv'd, and believ'd it in a due Mannner to " the Glory of God, and their own Salvation, do receive it thus, is " the *Authority* and *Veracity* of God speaking in and by the *Word*, and " evidencing themselves by that *Light* and *Power*, which is convey'd " into the Soul, in and by the *Scriptures* or the *written Word* it self.

Many Arguments offer themselves for Proof of this important Assertion, which hitherto we have explain'd; some of the most considerable of them I shall shortly propose, without insisting largely on the Prosecution of them, designing only to hint the Arguments that satisfy'd me, That I was not mistaken as to the *Grounds* whereon, by the forementioned Experience, I was brought to receive the Scripture as the *Word of God.*

Arg. I. God ordinarly, in the Scripture, offers his Mind, requiring us to believe, obey and submit to it upon *this* and no other *Ground*, *the Evidence of his own Testimony.* The only Reason commonly insisted on to warrant our *Faith*, oblige us to believe and receive, is, *Thus saith the Lord.*

Arg. II. When *false Prophets* set up their pretended *Revelations* in Competition with his Word, he remits them to the Evidence his Words gave by their own *Light and Power*, as that which was sufficient to distinguish and enable them to reject the false Pretensions, and cleave to his Word, *Jer.* 23. 26, ---29. *How long shall this be in the Heart of the Prophets that prophesy Lies? that are Prophets of the Deceit of their own Hearts; which think to cause my People to forget my Name by their Dreams, which they tell every Man to his Neighbour, as their Fathers have forgotten my Name for Baal. The Prophet that hath a Dream, let him tell a Dream, and he that hath my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully: What is the Chaff to the Wheat, saith the Lord? Is not my Word like a Fire, saith the Lord, and like a Hammer that breaketh the Mountains in Pieces?* In the latter Days of that Church, when the People were most eminently perplex'd with false Prophets, both as to their Number and Subtilty, yet God lays their *eternal* and *temporal Safety*, or *Ruin*, on their Discerning aright between his Word, and that which was only pretended so to be. And that they might not complain of this Imposition, he tenders them Security of its Easiness of Performance, speaking of his own *Word* comparatively as to every Thing, that is not so, he says, It is as *Wheat to Chaff*, which may infallibly, by being what it is, be discern'd from

from it; and then absolutely that it hath such Properties, as that it will discover it self, even *Light*, *Heat* and *Power*. A Person divinely inspir'd was to be attended to for no other Reason, but the *Evidence* of the *Word of God*, distinguishing it self from the pretended *Revelations*, and satisfying the Mind about it, by its *Light* and *Power*.

Arg. III. When further Evidence, as that of *Miracles*, is demanded, as necessary to induce them, that are Unbelievers, to receive and believe the Word, it is refus'd, as what was not in the Judgment of God, needful, and would not be effectual; and Unbelievers are remitted to the *Self-evidence* of the Word, as that which would satisfie them, if any Thing would. This our LORD teaches clearly in the Parable of *Lazarus* and the *rich Man*, *Luke* 16. 27. to the End. The *rich Man*, being disappointed as to any Relief to himself in the preceeding Verses, is desireous of preventing the Ruin of his Brethren, and for this End is concern'd to have them induc'd to believe. To which Purpose he proposes, v. 27. the sending of *Lazarus* from the Dead to certify them of the Reality of Things eternal, "I pray the therefore Father, *says* "*he to Abraham*, that thou wouldest send him to my Father's House: "For I have five Brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they "also come to this Place of Torment. *Abraham* saith unto him, They "have *Moses* and the Prophets, let them hear them. And he said "Nay, Father *Abraham*: But if one went unto them from the Dead, "they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not *Moses* and "the Prophets, neither will they be perswaded, though on rose from "the Dead. Here the Case is plain. The *rich Man* desires a Miracle to satisfy his Brethren. This is refus'd, and they are remitted to *Moses* and the *Prophets*, as what was sufficient. He insists, and thinks a Miracle would be more satisfying. This is still refus'd, and it is plainly taught, That where the Evidence of the Word of God will not induce to believe or perswade, the most *uncommon Miracles* would not do it.

Arg. IV. When the Question is consider'd particularly, 1 *Cor.* 14. what Gifts were most to the Use of the Church, the miraculous Gifts of *Tongues*, &c. or the ordinary Gift of *Prophecy*, or Preaching of the *Word*; this last is preferr'd, as what was not only more useful for the Edification of *Believers*, but for inducing *Unbelievers* to receive the Word, and submit to it, and the Way wherein it does this, is mention'd, which is no other than by its evidencing it self upon its *naked Proposal*, in preaching by its own Light and Power. Let the whole Pas-

sage

Passage be considered from v. 22. but especially v. 24, 25. *But if all Prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or unlearn'd, he is convinced of all; he is judg'd of all: And thus are the Secrets of his Heart made manifest, and so falling down on his Face, he will worship God, and report, That God is in you of a Truth.*

Arg. V. The constant Practice of the Apostles fully proves our Assertion. The Way they took to perswade the unbelieving World to receive the *Gospel*, was not by proposing the Arguments commonly insisted upon now, for proving the Truth of their Doctrine, nor working, nor insisting upon Miracles wrought by them, for Confirmation of the Truth, but by a *bare Proposal* of the Truth, and a sincere Manifestation of it to Consciences, in the Name God they proceeded, and demanded Acceptance of it, *as the Word of God and not of Man*; and by this Means they converted the World. And when they did refuse it thus propos'd, they *shook off the Dust of their Feet for a Testimony against them*, and so laid them open to that awful Threating of our Lord, of Punishments more intolerable then these of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*.

Arg. VI. The *Experience* of those who do *believe aright*, confirms it fully. However they may be relieved against the Objections, and capacitate to deal with Adversaries by other Arguments and Means, yet that whereon Believers of all Sorts, learn'd and unlearn'd, lean, is the *Word of God evidencing it self* unto their *Faith*, by its own *Light* and *Power*. The Unlearn'd are for most Part capable of no other Evidence, and yet upon this alone in all Ages, in Life and Death, in doing and suffering, they have evidenc'd another Sort of Stability and Firmness in cleaving to it, and suffering cheerfully for it, on this Account only, than the most learn'd, who were best furnish'd with Arguments of another Nature, but wanted this, and indeed if this is not allow'd the *Ground of Faith*, there can be no *Divine Faith* leaning upon a *Divine* and *Infallible Bottom*; and the Vulgar, who are uncapable of any other Evidence, must rove in Uncertainty, and *pin their Faith upon the Sleeves of their Teachers*: But bless'd be God, here is a Ground sufficient to rest on, that will not fail. He speaks, and *his Sheep*, notwithstanding that Simplicity, which makes them contemptible in the Eyes of the World, *know his Voice, hear* it, and *follow him*, and *will not hear the Voice of a Stranger*.

PROP. XI.

" Whereas it may be pretended, That on Supposition of what has
" been now asserted, the People of God, at Times when they discern
" not this *Light*, feel not this *Power*, have no Ground for their
" *Faith*, with Respect unto these Passages or Portions of Scripture,
" which do not thus evidence themselves to be from God, at the
" Time of their Perusal, or of their hearing of them, by affecting
" the Believer's Mind, with a Sense of this *Divine Light*
" and *Power*. In Opposition to this Objection, and for removing the
" Ground of it, I offer the following Truth, which afterwards I
" shall clear, That there is no Part of the Scriptures, *in so far as God*
" *speaks in them*, but doth thus sufficiently evidence its Authority in
" its Season, unto *Persons capable of discerning it*, and *duly applying them-*
" *selves in the Way of the Lords Appointment, in so far as they are at pre-*
" *sent concern'd to receive, believe and obey it*, in Compliance with their
" *present Duty*, and reach the Meaning of the Proposition in and by
" the Use of the Means of God's Appointment.

THis Objection has sometimes had a very formidable Aspect to me, and therefore I shall distinctly propose, so far as the Brevity design'd will permit, the Grounds whereon I was satisfy'd about the *Truth* propos'd in Opposition to it, in the following explicatory and confirming Observations, referring for further clearing, as to the Way wherein the Lord quieted me, and relieved me of Objections, to the foregoing Chapter.

I. We are to observe, That *Faith*, or that Power in Man, whereby he assents to Truth upon *Testimony*, is corrupted, as well as his other Powers, by his *Fall*. And though in Believers it is renew'd, they receiving an Understanding, whereby they know him that is True, and *know his Voice from that of a Stranger*, yet even in them it is imperfect, and habitually weak, they being renew'd, and so knowing but in Part; as it is with Respect to his other Powers, so it is as to this. And besides this *habitual Weakness*, which engages them to cry to the Lord daily for carrying on the *Work of Faith with Power*, and an Increase of Faith to believe and live to God in a due Manner; besides, I say, this *habitual Weakness* it is liable to various extraordinary incidental Disorders, arising from inward and outward Occasions, while the Believer is here in

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this Valley of Tears, subject unto the Miserys occasion'd by the remaining Power of indwelling Corruptions, which are in themselves restless, and raise many Foggs, Damps and Mists to overcloud the Soul: And by the Violence of outward Temptations, which Satan and the World throng in upon him, through the wise Permission of God, for the Excercise of their Faith in this State of Trial, the Darkness is exceedingly increas'd, *Faith* weakn'd, or at least straitned as to its Excercise. And by this Means this spiritual Discerning is sometimes in more, or in less obstructed and darkned. Now if at such Seasons, while the Believer finds himself out of Order thus, he cannot discern this Evidence of the *Divine Authority* of the *Word*, no not where it shines clearest, in so far as to quiet him, he has no Reason to reject the *Word*, question it for Want of *Evidence*, but may be, and ordinarly Believers are exercis'd in Complaints of their own Darkness, as the Cause of their not discerning God in his Word: *Vitium est in Organo*, there is no Fault in the Word, but in the *discerning Power*. The Argument, if it be urg'd with Respect to such a Case as this, would prove, That there is no Light in the Sun.

II. The LORD's People, through the *Power* of Corruption, and *Force* of Temptation, are oft negligent and inadvertent, and do not apply their Minds, nor incline their Hearts unto the *Word*, with the Attention necessary to discern the *Evidence* of God in the Word, and as a Punishment of this, God withdraws, and leaves their Minds under the Darkness they are hereby cast into, and then when God passes by before, or on the *Right* or *Left-hand*, and worketh round about them, they cannot perceive him. If we turn our Back to the Light, shut our Eyes, or will not be at Pains to remove Motes, or Humors that obstruct our Sight, no Wonder we do not discern the Light. When we have Idols in our Hearts and Eyes, no Wonder we see not God. If we lay not aside the Filthiness of our Hearts, we cannot *receive the ingrafted Word, that is able to save our Souls*, in a due Manner.

III. Although the whole Scriptures come from God, are his Word, yet every Proposition in them contain'd, as it is a Proposition in it self expressive of such a particular Purpose or Thought, is not his Word: For God tells us Mens Words and the Devils Words. Now though God speaks them in so far as to teach, That they are such Persons Words; yet the Propositions in themselves are not to be receiv'd with Faith: But we are only to assent to this upon the Authority of God, That they said so and so, not always that these are true; for oftimes in themselves they are false and pernicious. Now *Evidence* as to any more than

the *Truth* of God in the historical Narration of them, is not to be expected, nor are the Scriptures to be impeach'd for the Want of it.

4. Albeit every *Divine Truth*, which God speaks, has *equal Authority*, and *sufficient Evidence*; yet every *Scripture Truth* has not a beaming *Evidence, equally great, clear and affecting*. The *Scripture* is like the Heaven, another Piece of Divine Workmanship: It is full of Stars, every one of these has Light sufficient to answer its own particular Use for which it was design'd, and to satisfy the discerning and attentive Beholder, That it is *Light*: But yet every one gives not a *Light* equally clear, great, glorious, affecting and powerful; *There is one Glory of the Sun, another of the Moon, another of the Stars: And one Star excelleth another in Glory*, and sometimes the greatest Light, if it is at a greater Distance, like the fixed Stars, affect us less, and shine less clear to us, than weaker Lights, which, like the Moon, are nearer. In the Scripture, there are Propositions which tell us Things, which tho' they are in their own Place and proper Circumstances, useful to them, for whom they are particularly design'd, and to their proper Scope; yet they are comparatively of less Importance to us, as acquainting us with Things of less considerable Natures and Use to us, and which lie not so far out of our Reach, being in some Measure known, or knowable without *Divine Revelation*, tho' it was necessary, That in Order to the particular Use to us in our Walk with God, they should be better secur'd, and offer'd us upon the *Faith* of the *Divine Testimony*. Again, there are other Propositions, which hold forth to us Truths in their own Nature of more Importance, that lie further out of our Reach, being neither known, nor indeed knowable by us, without *Divine Revelation*; and which in our present Cases and Circumstances are more nearly suited to our Case, and wherein therefore our present Concernment doth more directly appear to be interess'd, and which therefore impress us with, and leave in us Effects more lasting and discernible. Now it must be allow'd, That the *Truths* of this last Sort have an *Evidence* more bright, great, affecting and sensible, than these of the former Sort.

V. Hereon sundry subordinate Observations offer themselves, which are of the greatest Importance for clearing the Difficulty under Consideration. 1. *Truths* in Scripture, or Propositions acquainting us with Things otherwise, in some Respect within our Reach, and only vouched by God in Order to the Stability of our *Faith* in them, in so far as we are in Practice oblig'd to lay Weight on them, and to give us not so much Satisfaction as to their *Truth absolutely*, as some *additional Security* about

about them, those cannot be suppos'd so discernibly to affect our Minds, as *Truths* of another Nature, in as much as this *additional Evidence* is more difficultly distinguishable from the *Evidence* we have otherwise for them. Besides that God seeing that we are not so difficultly to be induc'd to a Belief of them, or so liable to Temptations that may shake our *Faith*, sees it not meet to stamp such *vive, lively* and *affecting Impressions* of himself on them: For it is unworthy of him to do any Thing in Vain. 2. On the other Hand, these Propositions which disclose the secret Purposes, or Knowledge of God, and Things hid in it, that ly within the Reach of no Mortal, or perhaps created Understanding, without *Revelation*, must make a more vivid and lively Impression on our Minds, as illuminating it with the Knowledge of Things, whereto it was, and by its own Reach for ever must remain, a Stranger. 3. In like Manner Truths, wherein our eternal Salvation, or present Relief from incumbent Trouble, is directly concern'd, do more forcibly affect, and have a more powerful Influence, than these which ly more remote from our present Use, of how great Advantage soever in their proper Place they may be. The Moon, which points out my Way in the Night, guides me, and saves me from losing my self or Way, at that Time affects me more than the Light of the Sun, which I have formerly seen, but do not now behold, though the Moon *comparatively* has no Light, and borrows that which it hath from the Sun: In like manner, *Truths* in themselves of less Importance, and which derive all their Glory from those that are more important, yet, when they suit my present Case, affect me more, and their *Evidence* appears greater. *Every Thing is beautiful in its Season.* That there is such a City as *Jerusalem*, or that there was such an one, the *Scripture* tells us: Of this we are otherwise inform'd, and are not likely to be tempted as to its Truth, this however is told us in the *Word*; and this therefore we are to receive on Testimony of the *Word*: But the *Faith* of it is not so difficult, on Accounts mention'd; it is not told but with Respect to some particular Scope, and we have only an additional Security about it. Hereon our Minds are not so illuminate, influenc'd and affected with the Discovery, as when God tells us, he *was in Christ reconciling the World to himself*. The Discovery of this fills us with a Sense of *the Glory of God*, hitherto unknown, and that lay far out of the Reach of vulgar Eyes, or any Mortal to discover, without *Divine Revelation*. And therefore the Discovery affects more. Again, I am perplex'd about Through-bearance in some particular Strait, a Pro-

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mise of Grace to help in it, though it is of less Importance than the forementioned Discovery of Reconciliation, and has no Efficacy, Light or Glory, save what it derives from the former, yet coming in the Season wherein I am wholly exercis'd about it, and the Case whereto it relates, it affects me more. 4. Where the same Truth is at the same Time discover'd by different Lights, it is not easy for Persons, if not very discerning and attentive, to understand the distinct and particular Influence of the several *Lights*, such as that of *natural Light*, *humane Testimony* and *Revelation*; and yet each of them have their own particular Use, which upon its Extinction would appear by the Defect we would feel.

VI. With Respect to *Truths* of *high Importance*, otherwise unknown, which affect our Minds with the inriching Light of Things, by us formerly not known or knowable, and which by the Suitableness to present Circumstances, or Exercise, do more strongly affect with a Sense of the *Divine Authority*, illuminate the Mind, there is no Difficultie, save in the Cases afterwards to be taken notice of, or the like.

VII. As to these *Truths* and *Scripture Propositions* which relate to Things not so remote from our Apprehensions, or are not so suitable to our Circumstances, at present, or discover Things of less Importance to us, it is own'd, That even *real Christians* who have *Faith*, or a *spiritual Discerning* for *ordinary*, are not, upon Hearing or Reading them, struck or affected with so sensible, clear and affecting *Evidence* of God, as they are in other *Scriptures* of a different Nature and Relation, which arises from the Nature of the *Truths* in *themselves*, the *Manner* and *Design* of God in the Delivery, our present Circumstances, the Weakness and Imperfection of our *Faith*, the incidental Indispositions we are under, and other Causes which may be easily collected from what has been formerly hinted in the preceeding Observations.

VIII. All this, notwithstanding the least considerable of these *Truths*, has a *sufficient Evidence* of the *Divine Authority*, that is, such an *Evidence* as answers the *Design* of God in them, and is able to determine the Believer's *Assent*, and oblige him to obey or submit, and is every Way suitable to the Weight that is to be laid on them, with Respect to the Scope they are mention'd for, and Importance of the Matter; which though at all Times it is not equally discernible, for the Reasons above-mention'd, or others of an alike Nature; yet in its proper Season it is observ'd by judicious, observing and reflecting Christians. As for Instance, when any of these *Truths*, of the least apparent Importance, are

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question'd by Satan or Men, then the *Authority* of God is felt to have that Influence and Aw upon the Consciences of Believers, as will not allow them to part with the *least Hoof* or *Shread* of *Divine Truth*, and will make them maugre all Opposition, cleave to it, though it should cost them their Life. Likewise when the Spirit of God is to apply these *Truths* to the particular *Scope* at which he aim'd in asserting them in the Book of God, then not only have they such *Evidence* as influences *Assent* and *Adherence*, but emboldens the Soul to lay that Stress on them, which the Case doth require.

IX. Whereas our present imperfect State and Capacity, the Nature of the Things, nor other Circumstances allow of an *Evidence* equally clear and great as in other Truths, the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of God, in Consideration of this to prevent the Shaking, or at least Failing of our *Faith*, have as to these provided many Ways for our Security, as, 1. Tho' in the particular Passages, such *Evidence* shines not in themselves apart, yet there oft appears a beaming Light, when they are presented in Reference to the Scope intended by God. 2. Other Passages are join'd with them, plac'd near them, and related to them, which have a further *Evidence* of God, and tho' we cannot discern them when they are look'd at *abstractly*, yet when we look to them in *Relation* to these, on which they hang, and to which they are connected, we are satisfi'd. And I conceive there may be an Eye to this, in dropping doctrinal Passages, and Inserting them in Scripture History. 3. This Objection principally respects the *Old Testament*, as to the *Divine Authority* of which we are particularly secur'd by plain and evident *Testimonys* in the *New*. 4. Sometimes with such Truths there are direct Assertions of the LORD's Speaking of them join'd, of which there are many Instances in the Books of *Moses*; wherein it is expresly declar'd, That what was then enjon'd, was by the particular Command of God. 5. Believers for ordinary, being, in Reading of the Word of God, made sensible of his *Authority*, will not be easily brought to admit of any Suspicion, That a Book wherein God shews himself so evidently concern'd, and owns, as to the Bulk, to be from him, is or can by him be allow'd to be in other Places fill'd up with Propositions, or Matters of a coarser Alloy: And therefore they will rather question themselves, and their own Ignorance, than impeach the *Divinity* of the *Scriptures* on this Account.

X. Tho' no faulty Obscurity is chargeable on the *Scriptures*, as much of them, as in present Circumstances, is of *absolute Necessity* to Believers, in Order to their acceptable Walking with God, being clearly reveal'd, yet

yet there are many Truths, not understood by all, nor perhaps by any, therein insert, to leave Room for the *Diligence*, Trial of the *Faith* of *Christians*, their Progress in *Knowledge*, and other wise Ends. Now till in the Use of appointed Means, the Spirit of God *open* to us the Meaning of these *Scriptures*, we cannot perceive the *Light* and *Power* that is in them: But whenever he *opens* these *Scriptures*, that same *Light* that discovers the *Meaning*, will not fail to affect, and make *our Hearts burn within us*, with the Sense of *Divine Light*, Authority and Power. Of this the Experience of the People of God, as they grow in Knowledge, furnishes them daily with new Instances, and therefore they do not stumble at the Want of the present Sense of this *Light*, but are quickned to Diligence, excited to frequent Crys for opening of their Eyes, that they may understand the Wonders, that by the Knowledge of other Parts of the Word, they are induc'd to believe couched in these Parts, which yet they know not.

XI. As has been before more than insinuate, there are, in *Scripture*, Truths design'd for, and suited to different Persons, in different Circumstances; the Book of God being design'd for the Use of the whole Church, and all in it, in all Stations, Relations, Cases, Temptations and different Circumstances, in which any are, have been in, or may be in. Now when God speaks to one, what he says cannot be so affecting to another, no wise in the same or like Case; though yet he may know somewhat of the LORD's Voice in it. And the same is to be said as to the same Person, with Respect to different Cases.

XII. It must be still minded, that tho' every Part of *Scripture* has in its proper Place and Degree, a *sufficient Evidence* of the *Divine Authority*, yet the *actual Discerning* of it, depends very much upon the *present State* of the *discerning Power* or *Faith* of the Christian, which discerns it or not, or discerns it more or less clearly, as it is most strong or weak, more free from accidental Indispositions, outward Temptations, or more affected by them. And the same is to be said, as to its being more or less intently and orderly applied to the Observation of the *Evidence* of God in the *Word*.

XIII. Yet whereas they, who are once renew'd, do continue still *Children of the Light*, and have a spiritual Capacity of discerning the *LORD's Voice* from that of a *Stranger*, they do for ordinary, in the *Scriptures*, find the *Authority* of God *evidencing it self* suitably to the particular Exigence of of their particular Cases, where the *Truths* that occur are not such, wherein their present *Faith* or *Practice* is immediately affected,

or

or where the *Truths* are such as to which, in their own abstract Nature, no more is requir'd save a bare Assent, they being only insert with Respect to some other particular Scope, where the *Truths* are not presently assaulted, where they are not immediately call'd to hazard much upon them, or in other the like Cases they are indeed less affected, but one Way or other, from one Thing or other, as much of God shines in them as is *sufficient* to engage to a present Adherence, and some becoming Reverence as to the *Oracles* of God, which may in their Season manifest their Usefulness to us, and do at present manifest it to others. And where *Truths* are of a different Nature and Importance, and suit present Necessitys, and require more distinct Actings of Faith or Obedience, and we are call'd to lay more Stress on them; in that Case the *Evidence* of God shines more brightly. And scarce ever will a discerning and attentive Christian, who is not grievously indispos'd by some casual Disorder, read the *Scriptures*, or any considerable Part of them, but some where or other, in the Scope or particular Words, and Propositions, or their Contexture, some *Light* will shine in upon the Soul, inforcing a Conviction, *That God is in it of a Truth.*

"XIV. When the Faith of the Lord's People is assaulted as to the *Truth* of the *Word*; when in difficult Cases and Dutys they are call'd to lay much Stress upon the *Word*, and hazard as it were their *All*; when they are distress'd with particular and violent Temptations, and need Comfort; when under spiritual Decays, and God designs to restore them; when newly brought in, and need to be confirmed; when they are humble and diligent, and the LORD designs to reward them graciously, and encourage them to go on; when difficulted to find Duty, and waiting on the LORD for Light in Cases of more than usual Importance; when the LORD has a Mind to carry any on to peculiar Degrees of Holiness and Grace, and employ them in special Services; and, in a Word, wherever any extraordinary Exigence requires, then the LORD opens his Peoples Ears, removes what intercepts the Discoverys of his Mind, fixes their Ear to hear, and speaks the Word distinctly, powerfully and sweetly to the Soul, and gives them in and by it, such a Taste of his *Goodness*, *Wisdom* and *Power*, and *Experiences* of his *Authority* in the *Word*, gracious Design and Hand in its Application at present, as fills the Soul with the *Riches* and *full Assurance of Faith*, Peace Joy and Stedfastness in *believing*.

" Whereas there are *different Readings* of particular Places in ancient
" Copies, and Places wrong translated in our Versions, it may be
" pretended, That we are, or may be impos'd upon, and assent to
" *Truths*, or rather to *Propositions*, not of a *Divine Original*, casually
" crept into our Copys of the *Original*, or *Translation*. In answer
" hereto, the foregoing *Ground* of *Faith* lays a sufficient Bottom for
" the Satisfaction of Christians, in so far as their Case and particu-
" lar Temptations require.

TO clear this a little, I shall offer the ensuing Remarks.

I. Where the *Authority* of God *evidences it self* in the Way above explain'd, and confirm'd to the Mind, Believers have a stable and sure *Foundation* for their *Faith*, whether they use *Translations* or the *Originals*, though it must be allow'd, where Persons are capable of it, the *Originals* are most satisfying. And this is plainly the Case, as all real Christians from certain Experience know, as to all the *Truths* of the greatest Importance, and whereon our *Faith* or *Obedience* are more immediately or directly concern'd: So that as to these there is no Room left for this Objection.

II. The *Wisdom* of God has so carefully provided for the Security and Stability of our *Faith*, as to particular *Truths* of any considerable Importance, against Pretences of this, or an alike Nature, That our *Faith* rests not upon the *Evidence* of one *single Testimony*, but such *Truths* upon a Variety of Occasions are often repeated, and our *Faith* leans upon them, not only as thus frequently repeated, but *clear'd* and *confirm'd* by their *Connection* to other *Truths*, which infer them and the whole *Analogy of Faith*, or *Current of the Scriptures*, with Respect to that which is the *principal Design of God*. So that we are in no Hazard of being depriv'd of any one *Truth*, of any considerable Influence, in *Faith* or *Practice* by pretended Corruptions, or wrong Translation. The famous Dr. *Owen*, who had consider'd the whole various Readings, and well knew the Failures of *particular Translations*, observes, That were all the *various Readings* added to the *worst* and most *faulty Translation*, the *Church* of God would not sustain by it the Loss of one *important Truth*.

III. Where any Person is particularly concern'd to be satisfy'd which is the right *Reading* of any particular Passage, and how it ought to be translated, they may by the Help of the Ministers of the Gospel, such of them as are particularly fitted with Skill in such Matters, & by the Endeavours of learn'd Men, who have particularly consider'd every one of

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these Passages in a *humble Dependence* on God for the *Blessing* of these *Means*, which the Wise God has mutiplied, since Difficulties of this Sort begun to creat any Trouble to the *Faith* of his People; by these Means, I say, join'd with an Eye to the LORD, they may come to be particularly satisfy'd; *If any Man will do his Will, he shall know the Doctrine, whether it is of God.*

IV. Where there is not Access to these Means, which will not readly happen to Persons call'd to such Exercise, which rarely befalls the *vulgar Sort* of *Christians*; yet the Lord can easily relieve the Person thus exercised by evidencing his Authority to the Conscience in a satisfying Light, or by inabling him to wait for *Light* until the Solution come, or by removing the Temptation, when it becomes too strong, or by leading him to rest in the *particular Truth*, as secur'd by other Passages not question'd, or by some such like Way.

V. The Difficulty as to *Translations* is really of less Importance; and as to the other about *pretended Corruptions*, ordinary Christians, whose Consciences are daily affected with the *Evidence* of God's *Authority* in the *Word*, and his owning it as his Word, speaking by it to them, and conveying *Divine Influences* of *Light*, *Life* and *Comfort*, will not fear or intertain any Suspicion so unworthy of God, as, That he could allow the *Word* he thus owns, under a Pretence of his *Authority*, to impose on them. Assertions of humane Extract, and of any ill Consequence to their *Faith* or *Obedience*.

VI. I shall only subjoin this one Observation, That Enemys gain more by proposing these pretended Corruptions *in Cumulo*, and in such a bulky Way as to affright *Christians* who are capable of such Objections, than by insisting upon any particular one, and Attempts to prove them of equal *Authority* with the *Reading*, retain'd in the *approv'd Originals*. Their Unsuccessfulness in Endeavours of this last Sort discovers, That there is really nothing of Weight in that so much noised Objection about *various Readings*: For if there were any such *Readings* as could really make any considerable Alteration, and were supported with any Authority able to cope with the *receiv'd Readings*, why do they not produce these? Others are of no Consideration: These only are to be regarded; and of this Sort, there are but very few, that the most Impudent dare pretend: And these few have been disprov'd and disallow'd by Persons of *equal Capacity* and *Learning*. But to leave this, which is above the ordinary Sort of *Christians*, the LORD's People, to whom he has evidenc'd his own *Authority*, in the Way above-mention'd, will be mov'd with none of these Things. They will not forego the Word, but retain it as their Life and pay Respect to

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it as the *Word of* GOD; and they have good Reason to do so.

I shall now obtrude hence,

I. How justly *Divine Faith* may be said to be *Infallible*, as standing on an *Infallible Ground*, the *Faithfulness* and *Truth* of God in the Word. Through Darkness we may sometimes not discern, through the Negligence not observe, or thro' the Force of Temptations interposing betwixt us and it, we may lose Sight of the *Evidence* of *this Authority*; and so our Faith may shake or fail. But while it fixes on this, it cannot fail, tho' we may quit, or by Violence be beat off; the *Ground* is firm, and cannot fail, *the Scriptures cannot be broken.*

II. Hence it is, That the meanest and weakest Believers, who know nothing of the Props others have to support them, do cleave as firmly to the Word, run with all Courage, and as much Cheerfulness, all Hazards for it, to the Loss of whatever is dear to them, Life not excepted, for the *Word* as the most *judicious Divine*, and oft-times they are much more firm. This is upon no other Grounds accountable. This *Reason of Faith* is as much expos'd to them as to the most learn'd.

III. All Objections arising against this *Ground* of *Faith*, will be easily solv'd if we consider, 1. That the *Scriptures* are a Relief provided by Soveraign Grace, for those of the Race of fallen Man, to whom God designs Mercy, and so God was not oblig'd to adjust it in all Respects to the natural Capacities of Men in their present State, but it was meet that the Word should be so writ, that Room should be left for the Discoveries of the *Soveraignity* of Grace, and the other Means God design'd to make Use of in Subserviency to the *Word*. It was not meet nor necessary that all should be so propos'd, as to lie open to Men without the *Assistance* of the *Spirit*, and without the *Ministry* of the *Word*. 2. The *Word* was not design'd alone to conduct us, but God has given the *Spirit* with the *Word*, who teaches us in & by it, as he sees meet. 3. The Word is design'd to be a *Rule* to all Ages, and therefore it was not meet or necessary, That what concerns Persons in one Age should be equally expos'd in its Meaning unto other Persons, who liv'd in a different Time. It's sufficient, That in every Age, what concerns that Time, lie so open, that in the Use of the Means of God's Appointment, they may reach that wherein they are concern'd. 4. The Word was design'd for Persons of different Stations, Capacities and Cases, who ought to rest satisfy'd in the obvious Discoveries of what concerns them, in their own particular Circumstances, and is requir'd to be believ'd and obey'd, more particularly in a Way of Duty, of them, tho' they cannot see so clearly what belongs to others in different Circumstances. 5. God has not *systematically* and *separately* discours'd all particular Cases under distinct Heads, but to leave Room for the Conduct of the *Spirit* for exciting the Diligence of *Christians* to study the *whole Scriptures*, and for other Reasons obvious to *Infinite Wisdom*, he has digested them in a Method, more conguous to these wise Ends. 6. The Lord designing the Exercise of the *Faith* of his own, and to humble them, and to drive them to a Dependence on him, and to punish the Wicked, and give them who will stumble at the Ways of God, somewhat to break their Neck on, he has digested them so, as that there may be Occasions, tho' always without Fault on God's Part, for all those Ends: *Wisdom will be justify'd of her Children*, and to some *he speakes in Parables, that seeing they may not see.*

FINIS.

A Modeſt

ENQUIRY

WHETHER

Regeneration or *Juſtification* has the *Precedency* in *Order* of *Nature*.

I.

The Queſtion ſtated.

THE Queſtion is, Whether *Juſtification*, which comprizeth *Abſolution from Guilt*, *Forgiveneſs* of Sin, and *gracious Acceptation* of our *Perſons*, doth, in *Order of Nature*, preceed the *Renovation* of our *Natures* by the Spirit of Chriſt, the *Implantation of ſupernatural Habits* of Grace, a *Principle of Life*, or the *new Creature*? Or, on the other Hand, Are elect Sinners firſt renew'd, regenerated and furniſhed with a *Principle of Life*, which being excited through the Influence of the *Spirit of Life*, accepts of Chriſt in the Offer of the Goſpel, whereon *Juſtification* follows *in the ſame Inſtant of Time*, yet as *conſequent in Order of Nature*?

II.

Difficulties ſtated on either Hand.

IF *Regeneration* is ſaid to preceed *Juſtification*, then the enſuing Difficulties offer.

1. How is it conſiſtent with the *Wiſdom* and *Righteouſneſs* of GOD, to impart his *Image* to a *Sinner*, yet under the *Curſe*? This reſpects GOD's *Act*, and ſeems to fix an *Incongruity* on him.

2. How can it be conceiv'd that a *Soul* yet under *Wrath* and the *Curſe*, is dignify'd with the *Image* of GOD? This ſeems to be inconſiſtent, if we look at the Things themſelves, and that Order, which their Nature leads to.

3. Does not this make the Object of *Juſtification* to be a *holy renew'd Saint*, and not an *ungodly Sinner*, according to *Rom.* 4. 5.

4. How can the Soul be Partaker of *ſpiritual Life*, before its *Union* with Chriſt, the *Fountain of Life*? *Union* is by *Faith*, by which we come to Chriſt for *Life*: But this renders it needleſs, becauſe we have *Life* before *Union*.

5. Does not this make the *Collation* of the *Spirit* antecedent to *Union* and *Faith*? And yet by *Faith* we receive the *Spirit*, *Gal.* 3. 14.

6. Does not this ſuppoſe the Heart to be purify'd before *Faith*, while yet it is purify'd *by Faith*? *Acts* 15. 9.

7. Is not the *new Creature* begot by the *immortal Seed of the Word*? Now, can the *Word* operate any other Way than by the *Interveniency* of *Faith* receiving it?

If, on the other Hand, *Juſtification* is ſaid to preceed, the Difficulties are many, which I need not ſtand to repeat at length; only,

1. How will this accord with the Doctrine of the *Reform'd Churches* and *Divines*, that harmoniouſly teach the contrary? And how does it agree with our *Confeſſion* and *Catechiſms*, which we ſign an Aſſent to? particularly, where they treat of *Effectual Calling*.

2. How can we conceive the *Acts of Life*, while there is no *abiding Principle* whence they ſhould proceed? The *Acts of Faith* without the *Spirit of Faith*?

3. How

3. How can we understand an *unrenewed Soul* to be the *Subject* of this *noblest Act of Faith* that unites to Christ, and by which we are justify'd? I speak of it *objectively*, and interessed in him and his Benefits?

4. Whereas there are many *Actings* in all the *Faculties* imply'd in *justifying Faith*, it may be enquir'd, How can it be understood that the whole Soul in all its Powers, should thus, *before it is renewed*, harmoniously and uniformly go out toward the LORD, assenting to the *Record* concerning him, *choosing*, *approving* and *resting* in him?

5. Can the *best* of *Fruit* be produc'd without a *Root*? These and many such Difficulties, commonly enough known and alledg'd, might be insisted on: But I think it needless. These may serve for a Taste.

III.

A Scheme of Principles exhibited for the Vindication of the commonly receiv'd Opinion, viz. *That tho' they are agreed on all Hands, to be* at one *and the* same Time; *yet* Regeneration in Order of Nature *preceeds* Justification.

Prop. 1. I. A Design being laid in the *Decree* of GOD to save *elect Sinners*, to the *Praise of Grace*, by *Jesus Christ*; they were in the *Covenant of Redemption*, giv'n to the *Son*. The *Law* of *Works*, by an *Act of Sovereignity* was relax'd, *not as to its Obligation simply*, but *in so far as it respected Man himself*, *as the Subject of the Obligation* to *doing* or *suffering*; nor was the *Law simply relax'd as it oblig'd* Man, even *elect Sinners to do* or *obey*; but *in so far as* it *oblig'd* them to *obey*, *in Order to Exemption from the Curse*, *and a Title to Life*. And he, to whom *elect Sinners* were thus giv'n, by the Designation of the Father and his own Consent, was substitute in the Room of *elect Sinners*, and thereby came under an Obligation in their Stead, to answer the Demands of the *Law* as to what it requir'd of them, in Order to avoid its *Curse*, and *entitle to the promis'd Blessings*; or shortly, he became oblig'd to fullfil its Demands, *as it was a Covenant* in their Stead. Moreover he undertook *as Mediator*, by the Price of his Blood to pur-

chaſe *compleat Redemption* for them, and all Things belonging neceſſarly to it.

Corol. My Deſign requires not a nice ſtating of the foregoing Truths, generally own'd amongſt the Orthodox; only I obſerve that from all this, the *Purpoſe* of the Father, his *giving* elect Sinners to Chriſt, his *Subſtitution* of him in their Room, and the Son's *Acceptation*; ſome *Relation* betwixt *him* and *them* doth reſult, which may as fitly be deſign'd by the Name of an *Union*, as any Word or Name I know to aſſign. It is granted that this is not that compleat *myſtical Union*, whereby we are actually grafted into him as Branches into the Tree, whether it ſhall be call'd a *legal* or *federal*, *fundamental* or *fountain Union*, as our Divines differently term it, I am not concern'd. Yet certain it is, that ſuch a Relation there is, and that it is the *Fountain* of all ſubſequent Advantages to the *Elect*.

Rutter. *on the Covenant. Pag.* 211. Witſii *Differ. Iren. P.* 71. Owen *Vind. and. Append. Pag.* 42.

II. This *Relaxation* of the *Law* as to the *original Subject of its Obligation, in ſo far as it was the Condition of the Covenant of Works, Subſtitution* of Chriſt and his *voluntary Subjection* to that Obligation, *&c. being all*, in the Purpoſe of GOD, and Tranſactions of the Father and Son, in the Covenant of Redemption, expreſly and directly deſign'd *for them* who were *giv'n* of the Father, it follows plainly, That immediately upon Chriſt's yielding of *Satisfaction* demanded, *paying the Price*, or his *Engagement* (for that is equivalent where the Undertaker could not, nor would fail) there did reſult a *Right for them* to *Freedom* from the *Curſe*, and to all the *Benefits* of his *Purchaſe*. This *Right* is not what the Lawyers call *Jus in Re*, but *Jus ad Rem*. 'Tis more properly ſaid, There's a *Right for them*, than that *they have a Right*; ſince they know not of it, it is not *actionable* by them, nor is it *actually veſted in their Perſon*. Yet with GOD it is *righteous*, that they *for whom* Juſtice is ſatisfy'd, a Price paid, Redemption is purchaſed, *&c.* ſhould *at the Time* and *in the Order* agreed on, be put in *actual Poſſeſſion* of thoſe Privileges. The Uſe of this will appear in due Time.

See Dr. Owen *as to this, againſt* Baxter *in his Death of Chriſt, Pag.* 68. *and Vindic. Evan. Append. P.* 30.

The Foundation of this Aſſertion lies in this plain Scripture Truth, *viz.* That tho' the ultimate Deſign of all is the Glory of the adorable Trinity; yet the principal ſubordinate End, proper and immediate Deſign of Father and Son in the Undertaking, Exhibition of Chriſt in the

the Flesh, his Obedience and Death, under all Considerations of it, as a *Satisfaction*, *Attonement*, *Price* and *Ransom*, was not to obtain *Liberty for the Father*, without Injury to his *Justice*, to bestow; or a *Right to the Son* to Redemption and the Benefits of it, that he might bestow them on whom, and on what Terms he saw meet: But the *Salvation of Sinners*, and the *Redemption of Persons*. The whole not only includes a remote Respect to Sinners: But the *Salvation of Persons* being design'd, the Designation of Christ to the Work of Redemption, *&c.* his whole mediatory Office and his Undertaking and Execution of it primarly aim'd at the *Salvation of Sinners*. It was not the *Impetration* of the Effects *absolutely*, but *the Salvation of lost Sinners by them* that was *primarily in view*. This is plain from this, That the Whole of the Mediation of Christ was pursuant to the Purpose of GOD, with Respect to the Salvation of Sinners. The Scripture speaks not of the absolute Procurement of these Things; but it constantly includes a direct Respect to Sinners, to their personal Advantage. The Father sent, the Son came to *save them that were lost*, *our Sins* were laid on him. He *was made a Curse for us*, *that we might be made the Righteousness of GOD in him*. He was made *LORD of the Dead and the Living*; or, which is the same, *had Power given him over all Flesh*, *that he might give eternal Life to* as many as were *given him of the Father*. In a Word, they, who ever they were, for whom Christ died, of which we dispute not now, being in the Design, and all being *for them*, with a direct and immediate Respect to their Advantage, a *Right* there must result *for them*. This is oppos'd by *Universalists*, because it undermines the Foundation of their whole Fabrick, *viz.* That the Effect wherein the Death of Christ, as a *Satisfaction*, *Ransom* or *Price*, did terminate, was the Procurement of the Things, or Impetration of them, and not the Advantage of Persons by the Application of them. But this must not make us forgo what the whole Tenor of the Scripture uniformly bears Witness to. The Charge of *Antinomianism* will be answer'd by the next Proposition.

III. *Pardon*, *Absolution* from Guilt and all those *saving Blessings* Christ purchas'd *sub Termino*, that is, It was agreed in the Contract, whereby Christ was constitute *Surety* and *Mediator*, that those *Blessings* should be actually giv'n out to *each* of them, for whom they were design'd *respective*, in *their several Generations*, in the *Season* and *Order* prefixt by GOD, to the *Praise of glorious Grace*.

Cor. Hence we see that the *Elect* can lay no Claim to any Thing, on Account of Christ's *Satisfaction* or *Purchase*, but *at the Time*, and in

the

the Order agreed on, and therefore, till then, in themſelves, they are in no better Caſe than others.

Cor. Hence alſo we learn the true Reaſon of this, That they, for whom *Satisfaction* is *made*, a *Ranſom paid*, &c. do yet continue under the *Curſe* or *Wrath* of GOD, as well as others: It is not becauſe Chriſt paid not the *Idem*, the ſame *in Specie* or Kind, that was due from Sinners, as *Baxter* fondly ſuppoſes; but the true Reaſon is, That all theſe Privileges, being contriv'd and provided by a Concert betwixt the Father and Son, without the Sinner's Knowledge, or any Contribution of Counſel, Performance, or Conſent, it did belong to them who had brought about all this, by the beſt of *Rights*, to give out, *at what Time* or in *what Order* they pleas'd, the good Things deſign'd, which was accordingly fixt in the *Covenant of Redemption*, all being adjuſted as to *Order* and *Time*.

IV. Chriſt Jeſus the *Mediator*, immediately upon the Performance of what was demanded of him, was fully diſcharg'd, in ſo far as he ſtood himſelf oblig'd, and to him, as *Truſtee appointed by the Father*, and *Head* of thoſe given to him, for whom *he gave his Life a Ranſom*; The Management of that *Right purchas'd for them* by his Blood, and *confirm'd alſo thereby to them*, and which, till the Time of their actual Inveſtiture, is lodg'd in the Hand of the *Righteouſneſs* and *Faithfulneſs* of GOD; The Management of this *Right*, I ſay, for their Behoof, was wholly committed to him, and Acceſs allow'd him at the reſpective *Terms* agreed on, to ſue it out, claim and demand the outgiving of the Privileges, and the inveſting of the Perſons with the *actual Right* to them, in the Order agreed on, and in due Seaſon, to make the *Claim*, crave this at the Hand of the *Righteouſneſs* and *Faithfulneſs* of GOD, is the Deſign of his *Interceſſion* or *appearing in the Holieſt with his own Blood*, which is the *Ground* of his *Claim*. This *Truſt* and *Province* he faithfully manages. The faithful Advocate never fails, in due Seaſon, to put in his Claim.

Cor. This Diſcharge of our Debt to our Surety, tho' 'tis not our *Juſtification properly* and *ſtrictly* ſo call'd; yet our Divines, *Charnock*, *Witſius*, &c. do not unfitly term it our *Fundamental* or *General Juſtification*: Becauſe it was *for us* he ſuffer'd and paid the *Ranſom*, and offer'd this *Oblation*. The *Right* and *Privileges* purchas'd and confirm'd by his Death was *for us*. And the Proviſion made for the Conveyance of this *Right* and *Privileges reſpects us*, and the Conveyance of *Right* and *Poſſeſſion* is hereby abſolutely ſecur'd, tho' mean While, in our ſelves, we are as before, till *the Term agreed on come*.

V. When

V. When the *Term* prefix'd, for the actual outgiving of *Privileges*, draws on, 'tis so ordered, That the *Elect Soul* is summon'd, at the Instance of the *Justice* and *Law* of GOD, for his *Violation of the Law*. The Charge is inforc'd on his Conscience; GOD, in the *Word's Discoveries* of him, thro' the Spirit's Influence, joining with the *Word*, is sisted as *Judge*. His *Presence*, *Majesty*, *Justice* and *Holiness* are realiz'd to the Sinner, and he stands now in this *lower Court*, at GOD's *Tribunal* erected there. He is beat from Denials, Pleas, Extenuations, Shifts or Evasions, that he can devise: Whereon he stands at this *lower Tribunal* before GOD, *Self-convicted, and with his Mouth stopp'd.*

VI. If any *Sentence* should pass, while Matters stand thus, it must unavoidably be a *Sentence of Condemnation*. The Charge is prov'd, the Libel is relevant, all Pleas made are repell'd justly, nay, past from by the Pannel. But the *Term* being *now come*, the faithful Advocate, that will lose none of his, steps in, appears in the *Higher House*, where he is entred with his *own Blood*, and puts in his *Claim*, on Behalf of the Criminal arraign'd before GOD's *Tribunal below*, to this Purpose, tho' not in such Words, if in Words at all I enquire not, "This poor "Criminal *was thine* by *Creation*, thy Prisoner by his *Rebellion*: But "*thou gavest him to me*. I bore the *Curse of the Law*, due to his Sins, "for him, behold my *Wounds*! I purchas'd all saving Blessings, lo "there is my *Blood*! the Price of Redemption. The *Term is come*. "I crave therefore that in Consideration of what I have done and "suffer'd, he be *acquit*, purchas'd Grace given out to enable him to "put in his *Claim* at the Bar, where he now stands personally convict: "And finally, that thereon he be absolv'd, accepted and entred to "orderly Possession of all purchas'd Privileges. Christ's Appearance in the Holiest for us must be allow'd to import no less by any, who own the Orthodox Doctrine, as to Christ's *Oblation* and *Intercession* and their mutual Relation.

Cor. Christ's *Intercession*, tho' 'tis represented as a *Prayer*; yet is not strictly *so*; But in as far as concerns himself, 'tis a *Claim of Right*, tho' as other *legal Claims*, out of a Regard to the Majesty of the Judge, it's manag'd in Form of a Prayer, or what is equivalent thereto; or *rather it is represented in Condescension to our Capacity*, after this Manner: The Way of transacting Things in Heaven, betwixt the *glorious Judge* and *Advocate* being above our Reach.

VII. This Plea being made *above*, on Behalf of the *Sinner* convict at *GOD's Tribunal below* is *admitted*, and the Admission of it, in what Manner

Manner soever it is done, imports, 1. *A reckoning of Christ to the Criminal*, or an Acknowledgement that his *Undertaking* respected *this Sinner*, now pursued by the *Law* of GOD, before GOD's *Tribunal on Earth*. 2. An *Acknowledgement* of the *Duenes*s, or to speak more properly, an *Acknowledgement that Absolution is of Right due* on Account of *Satisfaction* made, and all other *Privileges* on Account of the Price paid. 3. In Consideration of the one and the other, Order is, as it were, given out (I speak after our Manner of conceiving and expressing what is above our Reach) for the actual putting the Sinner in *Possession* of these Advantages respectively.

This is what Dr. *Owen* calls *Absolution in Heaven*, before believing. And it is, as it were, a second Step, Moment, Instant, or as *Witsius* speaks, *Articulus* of the *Sinner's Justification*. But this being of great Moment, for clearing the Difficulties above-mention'd, we must illustrate and confirm it. Observe

1. Tho' this, *in Order of Nature*, preceeds any *Grace* in the *Sinner*; yet this *Regeneration*, *Believing* and *Justification* are all *at one and the same Instant of Time*.

2. However in our Way of expressing the deep Things of GOD, and for our more easy Conception, we are oblig'd to think and speak of each of these as *distinct Acts*; yet we pretend not to determine the *Manner* how these Things are done, and such a Plea is made, its admitted, and its Admission imports what we have mention'd.

3. This is no new nor singular Opinion. Many of our old Divines have gone further in their Expressions: But what we have pleaded for, is no more than the native Consequence of agreed Truths before laid down. Dr. *Owen*, who was remote enough from Novelties, asserts this at Length, and defends it against *Baxter*, in his Discourse of the *Death of Christ*, and *Appendix* to *Vindiciæ Evangelicæ*. And *Witsius* in his *Dissertationes Irenicæ* pleads for it.

Dr. Owen *on the Death of Christ*, P. 68. &c.

Vind. Evan. App. Wits. *Cap.* 110. P. 130.

4. Besides the Confirmation given to it, by the foregoing Propopositions, unavoidably leading to this, we may add, That 1. This is the Order the Scripture directs us to, *Rom.* 8. 32. Christ is first *delivered for us*, then given to us, then *with him all other Things*. 2. The giving out of the first Grace, *viz. Faith*, in Scripture is declar'd to be an Act of *Righteousness*, 2 Pet. 3. 3. The Saints are said to obtain *Faith* through the *Righteousness of* GOD. But this it can no otherwise be,

be, but in Consideration of the *Right* obtain'd by Christ, and as it proceeds upon an antecedent Admission of that on their Behalf, which is all that is intended. Again 3. 'Tis expresly asserted, That *it's given us on the Behalf of Christ to believe, Phil.* 1. 29. or for his Sake. Now this imports, That GOD in giving it, has a Regard to what Christ has done for them, and that he thereon gives it out, as what is of *Right due*, on Consideration of that. And this is all that's intended. 4. How comes the Grace of *Faith*, for Example, to be given to *Peter*, and not to *Judas*, for Christ's Sake? Is it not that GOD looks upon Christ, as standing under *another Relation* to *Peter* than to *Judas*? And what is this, but to reckon him to the one and not to the other? Dr. *Owen* adds, That perhaps this may be what is intended by the *Justification of the Ungodly, Rom.* 4. 5. But as he is not peremptory, so neither shall I be.

5. Yet I say, this is not *Justification* of the Sinner, tho' 'tis a Step to it and issues in it. And that 1. Because it is not, at least, ordinarly, so call'd in Scripture. 2. This is a Sentence past, it's true, by GOD, but not in that *Court* where the Sinner stands personally arraign'd. 3. This Act *terminates* not on the *Sinner*. In it self it goes no further than, as it were, to speak after our Manner, a *Warrant* for the *Outgiving of Grace*, to put the Sinner in Case to make his Plea, where he now stands convicted. The Sinner is as before, till this is executed, which is at the very same Instant. I confess,

Cor. This *Reck'ning* of Christ to us, makes, as it were, a *second Step* or *Advance* toward that *compleat Union* design'd.

VIII. This *Act* being past in his Favours, who now trembles at the *Bar* knowing nothing of it, is instantly executed. The Spirit of Christ takes *Possession*, creates a *Principle of Grace* in the Soul; and in the wise and exact *Providence* of GOD, Christ in the *Promise* is held forth as the *Ordinance* of GOD for the Salvation of Sinners, and particularly as the *Propitiation*: The poor Sinner himself, through the enlightning, enlivening and quick'ning Influence of the same Spirit, in that very Instant, closes with, and accepts of Christ as his *Righteousness*.

IX. Hereon immediately GOD the Judge acquits the *impannel'd Sinner*, sisted before him personally, and receives him into Favour, only on Account of *Christ* and his *Righteousness* imputed to him. The Nature of which is properly call'd *Justification*. We need not enquire into it, being commonly discours'd of.

X. This *Justification*, properly so call'd, differs vastly from that *Absolution in Heaven* formerly mention'd. For,

1. The *former Act* did not reach the *Sinner himself*: But now the *Sinner* is *personally acquit* by an Act of GOD, *terminated in the Sinner's Conscience*. For,

2. In this Sentence, the Plea of *Justice* and *Law* against the Sinner manag'd in his Conscience, is declar'd void, and let fall for ever; so that none ever can again, by Warrant from GOD, insist against the *justify'd Sinner*, upon that Charge, to the Disturbance of his *Peace*, or his *Condemnation*. I deny not that a litigious *Accuser of the Brethren*, and with him *his inform'd Conscience*, may abuse this, to give the poor Creature Trouble. But,

3. In this *Sentence*, and by it, there is a *claimable Defence*, that justly may, and instantly should be taken hold of, and pleaded for the *Relief* of the *Conscience*, against all Disturbances of this Nature. And this with the former clears what is mean'd by *terminated* in *Conscience*.

4. The *Sinner* by this has immediate *Access* to *Peace* with GOD and his *Favour*; tho' sometimes he cannot at first recover so soon out of the *Fright* his former Condition casts him in, as immediately to use it.

5. This *Act*, as any one may see, is an *Act past here on Earth*, tho' by GOD, immediately and directly respecting the Sinner himself sisted before GOD, as above; whereas all *former Acts* reached not *himself* personally, but did terminate on *Christ our Head* and *Advocate*, for the Behoof of *Sinners*.

XI. By the *foregoing Propositions* it appears, That tho' the compleat *mystical Union*, betwixt *Christ* and *elect Sinners*, is not before *Faith*; yet there are several Sorts of *Unions* before it, and each of them attended with its own special Use and Influence. Nor is there any Danger of *Antinomianism* here. The most zealous Opposers of *Antinomians* grant all that I advance. Dr. *Williams* in particular, asserts all that I design most expressly; and our Divines say the same:

Gospel Truth stated Cap. 11. *Pag.* 92.

Witf. *Dissert. Iren. Cap. 6. Par.* 1, 2, 3.

1. Christ and they are *one in the Decree*: Which yet infers Nothing, says *Witsius*, but *that in Time they shall be actually united.*

2. They are *one Federally*, or as others express it, *Legally*, by Virtue of the *Covenant of Redemption*, wherein Christ is constitute *Head* of the *Elect*, and *Surety* substitute in their *Stead*; which yet infers no present Alteration

Alteration in their *State*, but leaves them as *before*, until, in the *Order agreed on* in that Transaction, they are brought out of it.

3. They are *one in Nature*. Christ taking Part with the *Children* herein, that *he might redeem them*, being our *near Kinsman*.

4. They are *one really*, tho' upon their Part only *passively*, when the Spirit of Christ in his Name, takes Possession of, and unites them to Christ. There are *two Bonds* of *Union*; the *Spirit* on the *Part of Christ*, and *Faith* on *ours*. *Union* must begin on his Part; and his taking hold on us is the Cause of our taking hold of him, and so must be, in Order of Nature, before. These Things are not contested; and yet are of chief Use in the Business in Hand.

XII. 'Tis likewise apparent from what has been discoursed, That the Sinner's Discharge advances by Steps; some of which do preceed *Faith*.

1. There is that *fundamental* or *general Justification*, as *Charnock* and *Witsius* call it, when Christ was discharg'd. This is in Time antecedent to *Justification*. Wits. *ubi sup. Cap.* 10. §. 2, 3, 4.

2. There is that *Absolution in Heaven*, which we have clear'd and confirm'd above. This is not in *Time*, but in *Order of Nature* only, antecedent to *Faith*.

3. There is *Justification strictly* and *properly* so call'd, which immediately follows *Faith*.

IV.

The Principles more largely laid down, explain'd and confirm'd above, more briefly summ'd up, and offer'd in a joint View, that their Influence into the Resolution of the above-mention'd Difficulties may more clearly appear.

Prop. 1. CHRIST JESUS, in the *Covenant of Redemption*, was substitute, and did substitute himself *Head*, *Surety*, and *Mediator*, for those giv'n to him of the Father, obliging thereby himself to make *Satisfaction* to *Justice* in their *Stead*, and purchase *compleat*

Redemption for them, by his bearing the *Curse for them*, to purchase *to them* all saving Blessings.

II. Immediately upon his Performance or Engagement equivalent to Performance, *a Right for those*, giv'n to him, to all these Blessings, did result, that is, *it became Righteous with GOD* to give, under the Restriction just now to be mention'd, a *Right* to and *Possession* of all those Things procur'd *for them*, by the *Satisfaction*, *Oblation* and *Price of Redemption* above-mention'd.

III. All these Things were purchast *sub Termino*, that is, to be actually given out to the Persons concern'd, at *a Time*, and in an *Order* agreed on, betwixt *Father* and *Son*, who were the *Contrivers* and *Managers* of this whole Matter.

IV. Immediately upon Performance of what he oblig'd himself to, Christ was *discharg'd* as to his *own Obligation*, and *actually instated* in the *Possession* of what was promis'd himself. The *Right purchased for Sinners*, being lodg'd safely in the Hand of the *Righteousness* and *Faithfulness* of GOD, *Action was allow'd him*, as their *Head* and *Trustee*, for their *actual Investiture* with *Right* to the Possession of all *in the Time* and *Order* agreed on.

V. When this *Term* approaches, the Sinner on Earth, by a Summons, at the Instance of injur'd *Justice*, is sisted before the *Tribunal of GOD here below*, where GOD is presented to him, in his *Majesty* and *Holiness*, as *Judge*, by the *Word* and *Spirit*; and *here*, *before GOD*, he is *charg'd*, *convicted*, and his *Mouth stopp'd*.

VI. The Lord Jesus Christ, the vigilant and faithful *Advocate*, knowing fully the poor Sinner's Case, *viz.* That "he is now *on* "*Earth* arraign'd before GOD's Tribunal, and duly convicted there, "and that he cannot orderly be discharg'd, but upon a Plea, where-"in he is really and actually interested, and his Interest evicted be-"fore the *Judge* in that Court, where now he stands personally sisted. The blessed Advocate knowing, I say, this to be the *Case*, and that *Term being now come*, he moves his *Action* in the *holiest*, in the *higher Court*, before the same *Judge*, on Behalf of the Sinner, where he is enter'd with his own Blood.

VII. This *Action* is admitted, his *Plea sustain'd*, and *Sentence* passes thereon, which issues not *first* or *immediately* in the *Sinner's Discharge*, but only *in what is preparatory thereto*, viz. The *present Out-giving of what is necessary to instate the Sinner*, in an *actual and actionable* Plea, and *enable him* to put in an *orderly Claim* for a Discharge, where he is

now

now arraign'd, that is, the *sending of the Spirit* to work *Regeneration*, and thereby enable him to accept Christ freely offer'd in the Gospel, by *Faith*: By which being united to Christ, his *Righteousness* becomes *pleadable* and is *presented*. The sustaining of Christ's Action in the *higher Court*, is that which we call *Absolution in Heaven*, which has been explain'd and confirm'd above.

VIII. Christ's Action being sustain'd in the *higher Court*, tho' it does not *of it self* liberate the Sinner *immediately*; yet the Advantage of this Sentence in Christ's Favours, for the Sinner's Behoof is that, 1. The *Curse of the Law* cannot be alledg'd against the Out-giving and actual Collation of the *Spirit of Grace*, or *Faith* in particular; this being instructed, That Christ has born it for the Pannel. 2. These Things being demanded, and a Price pay'd for them, they instantly are order'd for the Sinner, as what cannot of *Right* be deny'd, in Consideration of the Plea now made in due Time. 3. Immediately hereon, the *holy Spirit* in Christ's Name executes this, takes Possession, enables to believe, and makes the poor Sinner believe, working Faith in Principle and Act, and by this *mystical Union begun* by the *Spirit's Entrance*, is now *compleated* by *Faith's closing with Christ*, and making him its *Plea*.

IX. Immediately hereon, *GOD justifies the Sinner*, by an Act *terminating on his Conscience*, or on him *personally considered*, freeing him from all *righteous Pursuit*, upon the Charge now alledg'd, *constituting him free*, and *accepting him* into Favour, allowing him to plead this *Acquittance* against all Accusations, *Rom.* 8. 33, 34.

V.

Application of the foregoing Principles, for removing of the above-mention'd Objections, and other Things suggested to the same Purpose.

IF the Satisfaction of the Mind in a full clearing of the Difficulties had not been aim'd at, short Answers without such a Process, might have serv'd most of them: But the Way being now prepar'd, we shall directly answer them.

Obj. I. How

Obj. I. How is it consistent with the *Wisdom* and *Righteousness* of GOD to give out his *Spirit*, stamp his *Image* on a *Sinner yet* under the *Curse?* For 'tis manifest, That in the Sight of GOD, the Sinner is still to be *considered* as *such*, until he be *justify'd*.

Answer 1. Those of the opposite Opinion, at least, such of them as we have principally in View, are burden'd with the same Difficulties. The *Act* of *justifying Faith*, being an Effect of *special Grace*, wrought in the Soul of a Sinner, *antecedently in Ordine Considerationis* or *Naturæ* to *Justification*, the same Difficulty may be moved about the one as the other. How comes GOD to send his *Spirit* to work *Faith* in a Sinner, yet under the *Curse?*

2. Admitting what has been said above, as to the *Claim* put in by the blessed *Intercessor*, and GOD's *Admittance* of it, there's no Difficulty at all in the Business to conceive, That GOD granting himself *satisfy'd*, as to the *Criminal's Sins*, admitting a *Price of Redemption* paid for all saving Blessings, in *Consideration* of that *Satisfaction* and that *Price*, made and pay'd, and the *Benefit* of it *orderly claim'd*, in due Season, gives out what is at present necessary, for instating him in the *actual Right*, to full and personal Absolution. GOD hereon giving out those Privileges, looks on the Sinner indeed, as yet *under the Curse*; but withall, as for whom that *Curse* was born, and to whom he is, by Virtue of his Transaction with Christ, who *was made a Curse for him*, oblig'd to collate what was purchas'd, in Order to his personal or plenary Discharge.

Obj. II. 'Tis alledg'd, That this is contrary to that *Order*, that the very Nature of Things directs to, that a *Sinner yet under the Curse*, should be stamp'd with the *Image of GOD*, or that one dignify'd with this *Image* should be under the *Curse?* First, *Wrath* would be *remov'd*, a *Right given*, and then *Privileges*. This Order the Nature of Things directs to.

Ans. 1. There were some Difficulties here, if Matters stood so for some Time: But both being at the same Instant, 'tis scarce worth while to debate it.

2. Allowing it absurd to imagine, That one under *the Curse simply*, should be dignify'd with the *Image of GOD*; yet it is not so, That *a Sinner for whom Satisfaction is made and admitted*, as above, and this *Privilege purchas't* should be thus dignify'd in Order to enable him to put in, at that very Instant, a *Claim* to a *personal* and *plenary Discharge*.

3. The

3. The *first Result* of Christ's Death being the *Satisfaction of Justice*, for our Offences, according to our Way of conceiving, the Order of Things is sufficiently herby secur'd, in as much as there is no *Blessing* imparted, but upon *Satisfaction first made*, and a *Price pay'd*. As to the Order of the Investiture of the Persons with *Right*, and possessing the Persons of the *Privileges*, we must allow GOD to be the best Judge.

Obj. III. This makes the Object of GOD's *justifying Act* to be, not an *ungodly Sinner*, but a *renewed Saint*, contrary to *Rom.* 4. 5. And consequently the *Offer of Remission* is to *Saints* and not *Sinners*. This being much insisted on by some, we shall consider it the more largely.

Ans. 1. 'Tis observable in Scripture, That no Man is term'd *Righteous* or *Unrighteous*, *Godly* or *Ungodly*, meerly on Account of *habitual Righteousness*. These *Denominations* always respect *Acts*. *He that doth Righteousness is righteous.* Now the Person at the *Instant* of *Justification* is one, all whose former Actings have been *ungodly*, and who antecedently to his *Justification* has not done any *Works of Righteousness*.

2. This Expression being here us'd with Respect to *Justification*, it must be taken in that Sense, that relates to the Business in Hand, and he is to be deem'd *Ungodly*, who has no *Godliness*, that the Judge can admit, in Judgment, as a Ground of *Justification*. In the Eye of the *Law* he is *Ungodly*, have what he will, and as to this Business. Here then, and in a *Law Sense* he is *Ungodly*, having no Plea, but standing convict, with his Mouth stopp'd.

3. According to the above-mention'd Scheme, he can have no Eye to any Thing in *himself*, as contributing to his *Justification*, either *habitual* or *actual*. For, 1. *Habitual Grace* is not discernible in *it self*, but only in its *actings*. 2. There is no *Act of Grace*, previous, in any Instant of Time, to *justifying Faith*. And, 3. At that very Instant he is justify'd. Whence 'tis evident, That he can discern no *Grace* in *himself*, till he is *justify'd*, and so can lay no Stress on any.

4. 'Tis hence evident, That *Faith* is the Outgoing of the Soul of a poor Sinner convicted of his own *Ungodliness*, that sees nothing in himself, but *Sin* and *Guilt*, after Christ for *Righteousness*, and who is fully satisfy'd, That if GOD enter into Judgment with him, upon his own Godliness, he has none at all, no *Acts of Righteousness*, that can be admitted, much less a *compleat Righteousness*; yea on the contrary, he is *all Guilt, Sin*, and *Defilement*.

5. Nor

5. Nor can the Judge, in *Justification*, have Regard to it. Were he to proceed upon *habitual Holiness*, this would not pass according to the *Rule*; the Renovation being but in Part. And for *Acts*, the Sinner has none. So if Sentence should pass upon him, with Respect to this, the Judge could not avoid to condemn him. He must *legally find* him *Ungodly*, and as such condemn him.

6. I may add, When GOD is said to *justify the Ungodly*, this *Justifying* is not restricted to one precise Action. All agree, it takes in the *Imputation of Christ* and *his Righteousness*, and not meerly the *Act of Acquittance thereon*, which the Sound of the Word seems to import. Take it in this Latitude, as I see no Reason why we may not, and then the first Instance of the *Imputation of Christ*, as we have heard above, is in Order of Nature, before either *Faith* or *Regeneration*, as we have clear'd above: Tho' *formal Imputation* and *Justification* is consequent hereto.

7. From all this, 'tis evident, That this Account leaves no Room to Ministers to insinuate to their People, That they must not adventure by *Faith* to betake themselves to *Christ's Righteousness, till they see such and such Qualifications in themselves, Regeneration, Repentance* or the like, which is the Danger that the Movers of this Objection seem very apprehensive of; and to avoid which, some of them have us'd Expressions obnoxious enough to Misconstruction. The Minister dealing with the convinc'd Sinner is not to bid him look inward, to see whether he be regenerated, and truly repents; and if he finds not these, not to expect *Justification*, or go to Christ for it. Such an Enquiry, before *Justification*, is vain and prepposterous, and 'tis impossible ever to believe on these Terms: But he is with the Apostle, *Acts* 16. directly to press, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*. And on the other Hand, the Sinner, like the poor Jailor, without any such previous Enquiry for Qualifications in himself, should directly grip to Christ for *Righteousness*, as one altogether lost in himself, and destitute of any Qualifications that can avail him. And yet all this is without Prejudice to Ministers pressing *Conversion, Repentance* and *Faith*, at the same Time, as Scripture Precepts and Examples require, and that without troubling themselves or People, with the Disputes about the Priority or Posteriority of these, in Order of Nature, while it is agreed they are all at the same Time. Hundreds have successfully preach'd the Gospel, and many mo receiv'd it, without ever concerning themselves in these Questions.

Isai. 55. 7.
Mark 1. 16.
Acts 3. 14.
Act. 5. 30, 31.
Acts 26. 18.

Obj.

Obj. IV. How can the Soul be Partaker of *spiritual Life* before its *Union* with Christ the *Fountain of Life? Union* is by *Faith*, by which we come to Christ for *Life*: But the Order asserted renders this Errand needless, because we have *Life* before *Union*.

Ans. 1. We have before clear'd, That there are *several Kinds* of *Union* before *compleat mystical Union*. And as to this, Orthodox Divines, the most zealous Opposers of *Antinomianism* not excepted, do agree. And each of these *Unions* are attended with special advantagious Influences with Respect to the Elect.

2. To answer more closly, This *passive Union*, as we call'd it above, flowing from the Spirit of Christ, its taking Possession and working a vital Principle, must, in Order of Nature, precede all Acts of ours. *Union* must begin on his Part. The *first uniting Act* belongs to the *living Principle*. The *Spirit* enters into the *Body* and actuates it, and the *Body*, by Life deriv'd from the *Spirit*, cleaves again to the *Soul*: Just so, Christ the *Head*, by his *Spirit* first actuates the *dead Sinner*, and he thus enliven'd by this *deriv'd Life*, cleaves unto Christ again.

3. 'Tis hence evident, That it has no *Life*, but upon *Christ's Account*, and what is *deriv'd from him*.

4. It actively receives no *Life*, till by *Faith*, it is ingrafted in him, and comes to him.

5. Upon the Sinner's coming to Christ, he receives *the Life of Justification*. He that is absolv'd, especially when in himself he deserv'd to die, *receives his Life*, as he that is condemn'd loses his.

6. By *Faith* we receive the *Life of Sanctification*, and that in a *two-fold Sense*, 1. By our *closing with* Christ or *coming* to him, and the *View* that the Soul then gets of him, the *Principle of Life* form'd in the *Soul*, gets *Life*, is quick'ned, enliven'd, and Graces are put into *Action*. Till *this View* is got, all lies as it were dead. Also, 2. By the continu'd Exercise of *Faith*, the Increases and daily Supplies of Grace are convey'd for carrying on the *Life of Sanctification*. Thus it is betwixt the *Vine Stock* and *ingrafted Branch*. The *Stock* sends up *quick'ning Influences* to the *Graft*; the *Branch* thus enliv'ned, first cleaves to the *Stock*, and then the *Union* being *compleated*, and all Conveyances op'ned, *Life* in Abundance is sent from the *Root*, whereby it sends forth *Leaves*, *Flowers*, and *Fruit*, each in their Place and Season.

7. The *Life of Comfort* is wholly by *Faith*. And this is the *Life* of Life. There's no *Comfort* but by *Faith*.

8. *Eternal Life* in *Right* and *Poſſeſſion* are by *Faith*. And this is ſufficient to remove this Difficulty.

Obj. V. Does not this make the *Collation of the Spirit* antecedent to *Faith?* And yet 'tis by *Faith* we *receive the Spirit*, Gal. 3. 14.

Anſ. 1. The *Spirit* is received *paſſively* or *improperly* in Order to build us up a *meet Habitation*, *lively Temples*, &c. and we being thus prepar'd, he is *actively* by *Faith* receiv'd, as an *Inhabitant*, to dwell in us, and act in us, as Occaſion requires.

2. They who chuſe the other Side of the Queſtion, muſt allow, That the *Spirit* is given to work *Faith*, and ſo fall under their own Argument.

Obj. VI. Does not this teach, That the *Heart is purify'd* before *Faith*, contrary to *Acts* 15. 9. that tells us the *Heart is purify'd by Faith?*

Anſ. 1. *Faith* it ſelf is, as Dr. *Owen* well obſerves, a principal Part of the reſtor'd *Image* of GOD, and ſo of our Purity. What the Objectors anſwer to this, may be apply'd to the other Parts of the ſame *Image*.

Dr. Owen *of the Spirit*, Pag. 290.

2. What the Spirit of GOD begins in *Renovation* is progreſſively carried on by the *Exerciſe of Faith*, drawing purifying Vertue from Chriſt. And this is the Intent of the Text.

Obj. VII. Is not the *new Creature* begot by the *immortal Seed of the Word?* Or, are we not *born again of incorruptible Seed by the Word of GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. 1. 23? Now how can the *Word* have any Effect, without the Interveniency of *Faith?* It does not profit, but as it's receiv'd by *Faith*; therefore *Faith* muſt be antecedent to the *new Nature*.

Anſ. 1. Not to take any Advantage from the additional Clauſe, fixing the Senſe of *the Word* here mention'd, I aſk, ſince *Faith comes by Hearing* the Word of GOD, *Rom.* 10. and the *Word* can have no Influence, but by *Faith*, muſt not *Faith* be before *Faith?* The Argument is the ſame.

2. The plain Intent of ſuch Words, in both Caſes mention'd, and the like, is, That while, in the Goſpel Diſpenſation, the *Word* is objectively propos'd, and the Mind converſant about it, the *Spirit of the LORD*, uſing it as the *Inſtrument*, *Mean* or *Channel* of his *Influences*, works *Faith*, begets or forms the *new Creature*,

AN

ENQUIRY

INTO

The Nature of GOD's Act *of* Justification,

'TIS generally agreed, amongst *Orthodox Divines*, That the Word *Justification*, as it relates to the *Acquittment* of a Sinner, is to be understood in a *Forensick* or *Law Sense*; and that, by it, we are to understand, a *juridical Act*, whereby, GOD, as *Judge*, upon the *Righteousness* of Christ, does acquit the Sinner, and accept him into Favour. Now, whereas, 'tis certain, That the Sinner is really sisted at GOD's Tribunal, and there accus'd, by the *Law*, *Conscience* and *Satan*; and 'tis no less clear, That, upon his *believing*, he is acquit, Sentence passes in his Favours, and he is justify'd by GOD; it may hereon modestly be enquir'd, *How GOD gives out Sentence in the Sinner's Favour?* These Things are not visibly transacted. Nor is the Sentence audibly pronounc'd by any particular Form of Words, in the hearing of the Sinner arraign'd; much less, in the hearing of By-standers. The Question then is, *What is that Act of GOD? Or, How does he express that Act absolvatory?*

This Question is rarely, and but sparingly touch'd at, by our Divines so far, at least, as I know. And therefore we conceive much Modesty and Sobriety is requisite, in the Determination. Yet, some having deliver'd their Opinion, on this Head, I hope it will be no Presumption to enquire a little into it, providing always, That there be no Attempt, to *be wise above what is written*, which, *ουν Θεῳ*, we shall endeavour to guard against.

I find there are different Apprehensions of this Matter, among Divines.

I. Some there are, who distinguish betwixt *sentential* and *constitutive Justification*. The Sinner, say they, immediately upon his *believing* is *constitutively* justify'd, *Rom.* 5. 19, by the *Gospel Law*. Again, he is *sententially* justify'd, when the *Judge*, at the Day of *Judgment*, passeth Sentence upon him, acquitting him, according to the said *Law*. Mr Truman. Thus Mr. *Druman* expresly delivers himself, *Great Propitiation*, Edit. 2. Pag. 107, 108, 109. denying flatly any Act of GOD, as Judge, acquitting any particular Person in Time. He admits of no Act of GOD, but that which is *Rectoral* or *Legislative*, in the Constitution of the *new Law of Grace*.

This Opinion, however dogmatically deliver'd, as clear and unquestionable, I must confess, does not satisfy me; for several Reasons.

1. The Scripture Representation of the State of the Sinner, at the Time, when he is justify'd, seems unavoidably to require the Interposition of some *Act* of GOD, applicative of the *Law*, *Rule* or *Promise* (call it which you please, of this I dispute not now) to the Sinner, now personally attack'd, conveen'd before the Judge, accus'd and convicted. How such an one can be free, without the Judge's Interposal, on his Behalf, I know not. Nor seems it very easily intelligible. The Sinner's own pleading of the *Constitution* or *Law* will not end the Dispute betwixt him and his Accusers, if the *Judge* is silent; as it never does in the like Cases among Men.

2. *Justification* is expresly said to be the *Act of GOD*, Rom. 8. 33. In like Manner, we read of GOD his forgiving of Sin *now*, or at a *definite Time*, and not before; which cannot easily be reconcil'd to this Opinion. And I doubt, if the Scripture, designing to set forth such an *Act of GOD*, could use Terms more significant ro this Purpose, than those it has made Use of.

3. This

3. This Opinion seems entirely to deny *sentential Justification.* For, as to that *Justification*, which is commonly so call'd, at the *last Day*, 'tis a Thing altogether different from that, which the Scripture speaks of, under the Name of *Justification* before GOD. The *Judge*, the *State of the Persons*, the *Ground* and *Design* of the *Procedure* are altogether different. *See Dr.* Owen *on Justification, P.* 223, 224, 225.

4. The *Reformed Churches*, in their *Confessions*, seem harmoniously agreed in this, That *Justification* is an *Act of GOD, applicative of the Gospel, to the Sinner's actual Relief, upon his believing, and at the Time of it.* This, 'tis like, would not have much Weight with the Author, were he alive, who makes no Difficulty, not only to dissent from the *Reform'd Churches*, but also is bold to charge them with talking not very intelligibly, if consistently with themselves. But however, this will have its Weight with sober Spirits. *See Harmony of Confess.* *Great Propitiation, Pag.* 168, *&c.*

II. Others there are, who, besides that *Justification*, by constituting the *Gospel Promise* or *Law*, whereby it's provided, That the Believer shall be justify'd, are willing to admit of *another Act* of GOD, at the Time of believing, *viz.* An *immanent Act*, that is, *GOD acquits the Believer in his own Mind.* So Mr. *Ferguson* in his elegant Discourse upon *Justification.* Ferguson *on Justification, Pag.* 207.

But neither can I say that this fully satisfies. For

1. The *immanent Acts* of GOD are all *eternal*, nor are they distinct from *GOD himself*, as our Divines generally agree: But this *Act* of *Justification* is at *the Time* of believing, and not *before*, and has an Effect without him, it terminates on the Sinner, and makes a relative Change. *See as to this* Kendal *against* Goodwine *Part* 2. *Cap.* 4. *Digres. Pag.* 138, *&c.*

2. An *immanent Act* answers not the *End* of *Justification*, nor comes it up to the Scripture Account of it, which makes it to *terminate* in *Conscience*, and free the Sinner from any just Impeachment or Accusation, upon the Grounds, whereon formerly he was impleaded and pursu'd,

III. Others there are, who seem to conceive, That this *Act* of GOD's Grace *justifying* a Sinner, consists in or rather is, *his powerful Applica-*

Application or setting Home the Word of Promise, immediately upon the Sinner's first believing on, or accepting of the Lord Jesus.

For confirming this, several Things may be alledg'd, not without some Countenance from the *Word*, as, 1. This *Act* of GOD is unquestionably an *Act of Grace*. 2. The *Word of Promise* is the Channel or Means, whereby all the *Grace* of the Covenant, of whatever Sort, is convey'd to us. 3. 'Tis not the *bare Letter* of the *Promise*; but 'tis the *Promise*, as *us'd* by the *Spirit* of GOD, to whom the Application of saving Blessings belongs, that doth effectuate this Conveyance, whether the *Grace* or *Privilege* be in its own Nature *real*, or a Work of Grace wrought in the Soul of the Sinner, or only *relative*, such as Acquittment, and the Change thereby made unquestionably is. The Meaning plainly and shortly is this, The Spirit of GOD, by the *Promise* of *inherent Grace*, produces *inherent* and *real Effects*; such as holy Dispositions, holy Affections, *&c.* The same Spirit, by the *Promises* of *relative Grace*, and the *Application* of them to the Soul, effectuates a *relative* Change, or produces Effects, which meerly to contradistinguish them from *real* and *inherent*, I may call *moral* or *relative*, such as *Acquittment from Condemnation, Right to the Favour of GOD*, and *Privileges of Children*. 4. 'Tis agreed among those who are sound, That at first believing, there is a clear Discovery of Christ Jesus, as held forth in the *Word*, by the *Spirit* of the Lord, whereby the Soul convinc'd of Sin, is effectually determin'd to close with him, as the *only Way* of Relief. And this Act of the Soul is now generally thought to be the *justifying Act of Faith*. 5. It must also be granted, That at the same Time or immediately upon the Back of this, there follows *some Discovery* of the *Security* and *Safety* of the Soul's eternal Concerns, in Adherence to this Way. That there is some such Apprehension, is evident from this one Thing. The most discourag'd Soul, from the first Moment of believing, at its worst Condition, cannot think of giving up with its Interest in this Way, upon any Terms. This can never be accounted for otherwise, than by supposing, That amidst all its Shakings, there is *some Trust*, *Expectation* or *Hope of Salvation* in this Way. 6. The *Ground* of this *Hope*, *Trust* or *Expectation*, certainly is the *Promise of GOD*, clear'd, or set Home by the Spirit of GOD, at the Soul's first closing with Christ. And this *Act* of GOD, setting home the *Promise* to the Believer, as a *Ground* of *Trust*, and which always does in some Sort relieve, as was noted above, I take to be the *justifying Act* of GOD.

If

If I should stop here, what has been said wou'd appear too dark and perplext, and wou'd fail with many of giving a due Understanding of the Opinion; much less wou'd it be able to satisfy the Mind as to the *Truth* of it, or answer *Objections*. I shall therefore endeavour to give a clear and distinct Account of what my Thoughts are, which fall in for the Main with this Opinion, which has been but obscurely propos'd, as being gathered from dark Hints in Writing and Conversation.

General Observations laid down for clearing the Way to the Solution of this Question.

IN Order to a distinct conceiving of this Matter, the ensuing Observations wou'd be carefully taken Notice of.

I. *Faith* in the Lord Jesus has some special Influence, be it of what Kind it will, into our *Justification* before GOD.

The constant Use of those Expressions, that we are justify'd *by* or *through* Faith, while the like Expressions are not us'd, with Respect to any other Grace or Duty in this Matter, clearly evince what is asserted. *Dr.* Owen *of Justification, Pag.* 148, *&c.*

II. The *Subject* of this *justifying Faith* is a *Sinner*, cited to and sisted at the Tribunal of GOD, convicted of Guilt, destitute of any valid Defence in himself, and who, in a Word, has his *Mouth stopp'd before GOD*. No other is capable immediately of this *Faith*.

III. " The *Object* of this *Faith* is the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as " the Ordinance of GOD, in his Work of Me- " diation for the Recovery and Salvation of " lost Sinners, and as, unto that End, propos'd " in the Promise of the Gospel. He that would see this fully confirm'd and explain'd may consult the judicious Dr. *Owen* his Treatise of *Justification*, Chap. 1, 2, 3. *Ibid. Pag.* 114, *&c.*

IV. The *Acts* of *Faith*, in Reference to this *Object* requir'd of convinced Sinners, and compriz'd under the general Name of *Believing* in him, are severals,

1*st*, There is an *Assent* unto the Truths concerning Christ his *Nature*, *Person* and *Offices*, *viz.* That he is *GOD manifested in the Flesh*, that he is the Person, whom GOD of his Mercy to Sinners, made choice

choice of, and sent unto the World to recover them, that he is the *only Mediator* between GOD and Sinners, *who is able to save to the uttermost them that come to GOD through him*, &c. The *Object* of this *Assent* is the *Revelation of these Truths in the Word of Promise.*

2*dly*, There is the *receiving Act of Faith*, whereby we accept of, or receive Christ, *John* 1. 12. As to which we are to observe distinctly *three Things*:

First, This *receiving* of Christ not being capable of the natural or vulgar Sense of the Word, as apply'd to Things external, which are receiv'd by the Hand, *&c.* it is obvious, it must be taken in a *moral Sense.* And being thus taken, it points at *two Things*, or *two Acts.*

1. It supposes an *Act of the Mind* or *Judgment* approving of Christ, as *meet* for the Purpose, for which he is propos'd.

2. It formally and directly imports the *Will*'s consenting to, closing with, or being pleas'd with him as such. The *Mind* seeing in him all that's to be desir'd, with Respect to the Case the Sinner is now in; the *Will* is pleas'd, closes with him, and is satisfy'd, That he is such an one as the Sinner wants.

Secondly, If we consider this Approbation more fully, as apply'd in Practice, it takes in several Things, as,

1. A *Renunciation of all other Means* pretending any Usefulness to the same End, and standing in Opposition to, or Competition with Christ, as thus propos'd.

2. The *Soul's judging that Christ* and he *alone*, is only, and in all Respects, *fitted* and *design'd* for that Work, join'd with a Satisfaction of Mind and Well-pleasedness with him as such.

3. An *Acquiescence* or *Rest of Mind* in this Consent; so that the Soul is come to a Point, That it has no other Way to look, and that if it has but him, it is safe.

This is that Cleaving to the LORD, *which some call* Trust *or* Adherence, *and it respects the Way, or is a* fiducial *Confidence as to the Safety of the Way whereon* Trust, Expectation, *or* fiducial Confidence, *as to the Event, follows; and this is what we judge posterior to* Justification.

Thirdly, 'Tis to be observ'd, That the *Object* of this *Act of Approbation* is properly the *Goodness*, *Suitableness* and *Excellency* of Christ, as the Means of Recovery of lost Sinners. Now this much for the *second Act* of *Faith.*

3*dly*, There

3*dly*, There is in *Faith*, or there follows upon the foregoing Acts another, *viz.* That which is commonly call'd the *fiducial Act*, or *Trust*, that is, the Soul, in Expectation and Confidence of Relief by Christ, rolls it self upon him. And this may be conceiv'd two Ways; either, 1. More *generally*, that the Soul seeing, as above, the Vanity of other Ways, and the Safety of *this*, dare build no Expectation any where else, but looks to this as the only Door at which Relief can come in. Or, 2. More *particularly*, for a confident Trust of *its Salvation in particular* this Way, that is, through Jesus Christ. If the *Former* only be intended, it differs not from that *Acquiescence* above-mention'd; if the *Latter*, to wit, a *Confidence* or *Trust*, that we shall be reliev'd; whether it is more faint or more vigorous, it is indeed, where the other two Acts precede, a *distinct Act* of *Faith*.

As to this *last Act*, I shall only observe one Thing, which is, That the Ground of it is the *Promise* or the *Engagement* of the *Faithfulness* of GOD, for the *Salvation* of Believers, *and that as specially apply'd by GOD to this Sinner, and the Application discern'd by him.* This is of great Moment to the clearing the Point in Hand, and shall be afterwards further insisted on.

V. 'Tis disputed, which of these *three Acts* above-mention'd is the *justifying Act* of *Faith*; that is, the *Act* whereon *Justification* immediately and necessarily ensues, and with Respect to which we are in Scripture said to be justified *by Faith*. The *Papists* generally, and some of our Divines, as *Camero*, particularly, place it only in *Assent*. Of this I shall only say, it runs counter to the Scripture Accounts of this Matter, if it is not so explain'd, as to make it really fall in with one or other of the Opinions after-mention'd. But as to this, our Divines against the *Papists* may be consulted. Baxter *of Univer. Redem. Pag.* 111.

Others place it in the *fiducial Act*. And of these some in the *fiducial Act* more generally understood, as has been above noted: And so, in Effect, differ but in Words from them, who make the *second Act* that which justifies. Others, among whom were many of our *first Reformers*, seem, at least, to make the *fiducial Act*, strictly so call'd, to be the *justifying Act of Faith, viz.* A *Confidence*, *Perswasion* or *Belief that our Sins are forgiven.* But as to this, I shall only say, 'Tis obvious this can be no Man's Duty to believe so, but upon Supposition, That he is *antecedently justify'd by Faith*. See Dr. Owen *ubi supra. Pag.* 138. Shepherd, *found Believer, P.* 196, 197. *&c.*

Wherefore, others do place it in the *second Act*, which Dr. *Owen* describes thus, " It is the Heart's Approbation of the Way of Justifi-" cation and Salvation of Sinners by Jesus Christ, proposed in the " Gospel, as proceeding from the Grace, Wisdom and Love of GOD, " with its Acquiescency therein, as to its own Condition. This *Acquiescency* mention'd by the Doctor, is not an *Acquiescency* as to its own *Interest*, or a *Perswasion* of its *Salvation in particular*, but 'tis to be understood as above-explain'd. The Confirmation and Explanation of this may be found in the Place above referr'd to, and in the Writings of our Divines, practical and polemical, who generally embrace this Opinion, and with them I agree.

Mastricht, *P.* 53, 55.

VI. Assoon then as the Soul, by a Discovery of Christ Jesus, in the Light of the LORD, convey'd to the Soul in and by the Gospel, is brought to this Approbation of him, *Justification*, or the *Act of GOD acquitting* him, doth immediately ensue. And as to this Act, the Question is, *Wherein it consists?* or, *By what Means is it exprest? How does GOD pronounce this Sentence?* And for clearing this *Question* upon the *foregoing Principles*, we observe further;

VII. That the *fidicial Act*, or the *Trust* above-mention'd, in one Degree or other, necessarily accompanies, at the same Instant of Time and follows immediately upon the foregoing *Acts* of *Faith*; tho', as was above-observ'd, 'tis not the *justifying Act*, but consequent in Order of Nature thereto. I do not mean that the believing Soul has always, at first closing with Christ, such a steady and full Perswasion that its Sins are forgiven, that eventually it shall be sav'd, as that it dare boldly pronounce and speak out so much to others, or even resolutely assert it within it self; nor do I mean, That it has such a clear View of its own Graces, that it can reflect, and conclude confidently from the Sight of them, its *Election*, *Justification* and *certain Salvation*: To which two Sorts of *Perswasion*, the one built upon a *Reflection on our own Graces*, under the Influences of the Spirit of Grace, enabling us to discern them, and conclude from them our Interest in Christ; the other bottom'd upon a *Word of Promise*, such as that, *Be of good Chear, thy Sins are forgiven thee*, powerfully set home by the Spirit of GOD; most Part do restrict, how justly, I enquire not now, the Notion of *Assurance*. But that which I mean, is, That the first saving Manifestation of Christ to a convinc'd Sinner, pursu'd by the *Law*, *Conscience* and *Satan*, not only determines the Soul to close with him,

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in the Manner above-mention'd, but thereon also immediately follows such an Expectation, Trust and humble Confidence, as engages the Soul ever after to follow the LORD in a Way of Duty, without despairing as to the saving Issue; yea, not without secret Hope, tho' this afterwards in Times of Temptation, is variously clouded, that in due Time, it shall obtain a merciful Issue. This Perswasion and humble Confidence is really particular as to the Sinner himself and his own Salvation, tho' through the humbling Impressions he has of himself at the Time, his own Guilt, and the Aw he has of GOD upon his Spirit, he fears to express it directly and particularly of himself. *See Dr.* Owen *on Psal.* 130. *P.* 280,—287.

For confirming of this, I shall only hint the few following Things, 1. That which is set before the Soul's Eye at first believing, *viz.* A Discovery, in a supernatural Light, of the Glory of the Grace, Mercy and Love of GOD to Sinners in Christ Jesus, especially considering what the poor Sinner's Circumstances at present are, cannot possibly be suppos'd to have a less Effect. 2. When ever this Discovery, without which *Believing* is impossible, is given or made to the Soul, 'tis impossible but the Soul must be some Way reliev'd; for this is the very Design of the Discovery. Now this Perswasion, as we have stated it, is the least that can be suppos'd in this Matter. Without something of this, the Soul is, in Effect, as it was before. 3. The Experience and Confession of those, who have distinctly observ'd what has past in their Soul at this Time, and Instances of the Word confirm this. 4. When poor disquieted Believers, through the Power of Temptation and Confusion upon their Minds, deny any such Perswasion or Confidence; yet by its Effects, it's evident to others, That at the Time they have it. Doth not their resolute Adherence to Duty, in spight of all Discouragements, and their refusing to quit their Claim, or try other Ways suggested, plainly bewray some such secret Perswasion? 5. To add no more, our gravest and most experienc'd Divines, their placing the *Essence of Faith* in *Assurance*, seems to say, That they were generally perswaded, at least, that this was inseparable from *Justification*. And if they mean'd no more, their Opinion will, upon the strictest Trial, be found unexceptionable.

VIII. This *humble Perswasion, Trust, Confidence* or *Expectation*, must be allow'd in Believers, to be an *Act of Faith*, and not a *groundless Presumption*; and if so, it must have some *solid Foundation*.

IX. The Ground of this *fiducial Act* is certainly the *Word of Promise*, whereby GOD engages to pardon, and accept graciously Sinners in Christ Jesus. This the Scriptures many Ways clear. In the *Gospel Call* there is *a Revelation* of Christ to be *assented* to; an *Offer* or *Proposal* of him, as *worthy of all Acceptation*, to be *accepted*; a *Command* requiring and warranting this *Acceptance*; and finally, a *Promise* of *Mercy*, or *Salvation* to the *Accepter*. This last is the Ground of this *fiducial Trust*. *Psal.* 119. 74. 130. 15.

X. Yet the *Word of Promise*, absolutely considered, is not of it self, without the special Application of it to the Soul, able or sufficient to draw forth this *Trust*. The *Promise* must come, not only in *Word*, but in *Power and in the Holy Ghost*. 1 Thes. 1. 5. *GOD, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, must shine into* the Soul, and give that Evidence of the *Faithfulness* of his own Engagement, which only can prevail with the Soul to lay Stress upon it.

XI. Hence it appears evident, That there is *an Act of GOD, manifesting his Faithfulness in the Promise, and clearly with Power holding forth, and applying his Mercy promised for the Relief of the Sinner, now looking to, and approving of the Lord Jesus, as the only Way of Acceptance*.

To prevent any Mistake about this, when I say, That GOD *applies*, I do not mean, That GOD speaks in Way of an *absolute Promise* or *Assertion*, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*, whatever he may do upon some Occasions: But I intend, That at the very same Moment, when the poor trembling convinc'd Sinner is, by a clear Manifestation of the *Mediator*, prevail'd on to give up with all other Ways of Relief, and turn his Eye toward him, as alone *worthy of Acceptation*, and who only can be available to poor Sinners in this Case; there is, I say, at that very Instant, tho' in Order of Nature consequent, 1. A *shining Discovery* of *Mercy*, of which the Sinner had no Sight before in that Way. 2. This *Mercy* is particularly held forth to the poor Sinner for his Relief; it is set in his Eye as suitable to his present Case. 3. The *Promise* and *Engagement* of GOD is enforc'd upon the Soul, *thou shalt be sav'd*, that is, saving Mercy is presently tendered to the poor trembling Sinner.

Now, tho' the Sinner, not yet recover'd out of the Fright, which the Discovery of his Misery immediately before cast him into, dare not always presently go into particular and applicative Conclusions; yet, this *gracious Intimation* begets somewhat of a *humble Confidence*, and

and breaks, for the Time, at least, the Force of the oppressing and confounding Charge, he till then lay under.

XII. Now this *Act* of GOD, above describ'd, may, I conceive, be call'd, and justly thought to be, his *justifying Act*, or *Act of Acquittment*.

To clear this a little, observe the ensuing Particulars,

1. The close Connection of these Things, as to Time, all being at the same Instant, occasions unavoidably some Difficulty, in the Conception, Observation and Expression of the several distinct *Acts*, either of GOD, or of our own Minds: And this Difficulty is heightned by the Fright the Sinner is in before the Gospel Manifestation, and the Surprisingness of the Manifestation it self. Yet,

2. 'Tis clear, and agreed amongst sound Divines; as for others, we concern not our selves now with them, That there are such *distinct Actings* of *Faith* at first, that each of them has its proper Foundation; and finally, That the saving Manifestation of GOD's Mercy in the *Promise*, through Jesus Christ, is that which gives Ground for these several Actings.

3. 'Tis upon the Grounds given, evident, That there is such an *Act of GOD*, holding forth *Mercy* and *Favour*, in and by the *Promise* to the Soul, while it is fixing its Eye upon the Lord Jesus in the Way above-mention'd. I need not stand to confirm this further. There is not, nor can be any Ground sufficient to produce or support the *Trust* above-mention'd, if this is deny'd.

4. That this is an *Act of Acquittment*, appears thus, 1. The Sinner now is at the Tribunal of GOD, ready to sink under the Weight of a heavy Charge, and beat from all his Pleas. 2. The Gospel Discovery seasonably, at that very Instant, proposing the Lord Jesus to View, the Soul's Eye is turn'd wholly there. 3. While he looks here only for Relief, GOD irradiates the Soul with a sweet Manifestation of his *Mercy*, through Christ to Sinners, in the *Promise*. 4. This Discovery made at this Instant to the Sinner, whose Cause is now depending, and who is, as it were, empannel'd, imports no less, than an Intimation of the Judge his Mind as to the Case depending, an Acquittment from the Charge, in Opposition unto Condemnation, or a Discovery and Application of Wrath and the Curse to the Sinner's Conscience, which, in thir Circumstances, wou'd quite overwhelm. 5. This *Act* is sufficient to all the Ends and Purposes of an *Act* of *Justification*: For, *First*, It repels the Force of the Charge; and in Experience

perience 'tis found, That this Discovery always, at the Season of it, tho' it cures not all the accidental Consequences of the Sinner's former Case presently; yet it frees the Soul from that confounding Dread and Despondency he was formerly under. *Secondly*, It endears and lays an everlasting Obligation of Kindness unto GOD, the Sense whereof never goes entirely off the Sinner's Mind, tho' some Occurrences, at some Times, may weaken it. *Thirdly*, The Sinner from this Time forward, has, if not *at all Times* to his own discerning, yet *really*, and oft-times to the discerning of others, a *Liberty of Spirit* from that dispiriting Dread of GOD he was under before, and somewhat, if I may not say of *Confidence*, yet of *kindly Freedom* in his Dealings with GOD. *Fourthly*, This *Act* of GOD not only gives *Right* to Freedom from *all righteous Pursuit* of that Charge, that was but now manag'd in the Sinner's Conscience against him; which, I confess, *ipso Jure*, results, at the Instant of believing, from the Promise: But moreover, it *declaratively* and in a *juridical Way* applies this *Right*, and gives the Sinner a Ground whereupon he justly may, and should claim, insist upon, and make use of, against all Attempts of any who shall endeavour to revive the old Process. *Fifthly*, After this, none by Warrant or Authority from GOD, and in his Name, may or can righteously insist against the Sinner for his *Life*. *Sixtly*, When *Satan* the malicious Accuser, through the Permission of GOD, for wise Ends, litigiously wakens the Pursuit, and importunately vexes the Sinner, there needs no new or different Sentence to silence and repel him: If GOD vouchsafe of his Mercy, to revive the first Discovery, which is like an Extract of the first Sentence, the Soul is instantly quieted, and the Enemy confounded. *Finally*, Immediately upon the Back of this, GOD carries it toward the Soul as a reconcil'd GOD, and this, at first for most part, discernibly; or if it is not discern'd, this flows rather from the Sinner's Weakness, than from want of Evidence. In a Word, upon this Discovery, the Judge appears divested, as it were, of his *terrible Majesty*; the Frowns are no more seen in his Face, but a Pleasantness join'd still with such *Majesty*, as commands at once kindly Thoughts and Respect: The Pannel is no more imprison'd and hamper'd with the fearful Expectation of *Wrath* and *fiery Indignation*, as before, the Pursuers either entirely withdraw and disappear, or, if the litigious Adversary persist, what *Satan* or a *misinform'd Conscience* does now, is only like the malicious Reclaimings, occasion'd by the Disappointment they have met with from the Judge: And to add no more,

more, the poor Man, immediately upon the Back of this, with some pleasant Freedom, goes his Way and falls to his Work.

Whether might not GOD justly have requir'd that *Act of Faith* of every one of the Sons of Men, whereon now by a gracious Promise he has *voluntarly* obliged himself to justify Sinners, although he had made no such Promise?

If he had by a simple doctrinal *Revelation* universally reveal'd Christ Jesus, and the Way of Salvation by him, without promising to justify one or other, or fixing any Terms, but reserv'd these wholly in his own Mind, had not every Sinner been oblig'd to assent to the *Revelation*, and in Judgment approve this as the only Expedient suitable to their Case, and renouncing all other Ways to turn their Eyes to this, reck'ning thus with themselves, *All our Contrivances are vain; here, here is the only suitable Expedient? Whether GOD will ever vouchsafe to save me I cannot tell; he has kept that to himself; but if ever I am sav'd, this is the Way, and therefore I will look here, and let him do with me what pleases him. Justly may he set me aside; yet if I go elsewhere, it is in vain assuredly: Here is a safe Way, and who can tell but he may be gracious.* This I think has the *Acting* of that *Faith* that is *justifying*, or it is that *Acting* of *Faith* that is so.

FINIS.

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The Candid Reader will easily amend these or other little E S C A P E S.

PAGE 35. Line penult, for (are they) r. and they. p. 49. l. 2. for (their) r. these. p. 55. l. 21. for (Trust) r. true. p. 58. l. 35. r. detract. p. 59. l. 28. for (as) r. and. p. 76. l. 13. after Power r. (of) p. 88. l. 2. r. (terminated) p. 95. l. 1. after (uses) r. not. p. 111. l. 6. after be r. (,) p. 118. l. 28. before Deity, r. (the) p. 129. l. 8. in (without) d. out. p. 130. l. 19. after Misery r. (simply.) p. 141. l. 21. for (have) r. hate. p. 142. l. 24. after weighed, r. (that) l. 26. for (.) r. (;) p. 144. l. 26. to (where) join (fore) p. 153. l. 32. for (in Justice) r. Injustice. p. 162. l. 29. r. *alibi*. p. 166. l. 12. r. with, before (Difficulty) p. 180. l. 8. for (regal) r. legal. p. 189. l. 9. after it's, r. (not) p. 190. l. 27. for (meet) r. met. p. 195. l. 7. after Author, for (.) r. (;) p. 209. l. 4. r. *externa* and (*indiga*) p. 214. l. 4. for (as) r. at. p. 224. l. 27. r. *feliciorem*.

P. 2. l. 17. r. gross. p. 11. l. 16. after gone, r. (from.) p. 34. l. 24. after are, r. (the) p. 40. l. 21. for hads, r. (holds) p. 57. l. 25. after (them) r. (at) p. 60. l. ult. for (many) r. (may) p. 76. l. 6. r. (is) for (it) and (it) for (is) p. 88. l. 24. for (are) r. (as) p. 95. l. 33. r. require. p. 128. l. 28. for (to) r. (do). p. 129. l. 32. r. (is) for (it) and (it) for (is) p. 137. l. 5. after saying r. so. p. 156. l. 4. d. to be.

P. 10. l. 11. for his inform'd, r. misinform'd. p. 20. l. 15. for *Druman* r. *Truman*.